

Dream Big with God (1-session version)

Leader's Guide and Curriculum

By Diana Scimone

The Born to Fly Project
to stop child trafficking

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A special note from Born to Fly founder, Diana Scimone

A number of years ago when we were choosing the name for our new organization to stop child trafficking, one of our board members said, “Don’t choose a name that reflects what you’re trying to stop. The name should show what you’re trying to do after that.” That’s why we chose the name “Born to Fly.” Today our goal is the same: not just to prevent children and teenagers from being trafficked, but in doing so we want to give teenagers the opportunity to dream big dreams—to be who God created them to be. In fact, our mission statement is “stopping child trafficking...setting kids free to soar.”

That’s why this curriculum places an emphasis on showing teenagers how to have a special relationship with God so that they can “dream big dreams” in a safe and successful manner. God puts these dreams inside each of us. They are our calling and our purpose. And they are part of His plan for the world.

Around the same time that we were launching Born to Fly International, my Bible study class decided to study Song of Songs (also known as Song of Solomon). It’s one of the shortest books in the Bible, but we spent two years studying it! We would spend a month on a single verse. At the end of two years, we all felt we had barely tapped into the depths of this little book.

Those two years changed my life, and Song of Songs has become my favorite book of the Bible. One of my favorite verses is “Draw me after you and let us run together” (Song of Songs 1:4 NAS). That is a key verse to help teenagers have a special friendship with Jesus and dream “God dreams”—with Him by their side.

As you spend time in this curriculum, God will give you opportunities to call forth and affirm the dreams in each of the teenagers in your class—the dreams that He Himself placed there.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Just write to us at info@born2fly.org or write Born to Fly, PO Box 952949, Lake Mary, Florida 32795, USA. Thank you for being part of our dream of stopping child trafficking. We’re very grateful to you.

Diana Scimone
President, The Born2Fly Project to stop child trafficking

“Dream the dreams that alter the course of world history.”
—Bill Johnson

Introduction

This is a special 1-session version of our longer Dream Big With God curriculum, which is 6 sessions.

The goal of this curriculum is to help teenagers choose to have a higher relationship with Jesus and to know how much He loves them; this will help them be safe and successful as they follow their dreams.

Teenagers can live normal “good” Christian lives, but if they don’t understand the reality of how God sees them and if they don’t know the depth of His love for them, they will never experience the full relationship He desires with them. That’s why it is critical for them to find their identity in Christ.

As Christians, we often love God simply because we know we are supposed to. What if we could teach teenagers that there is so much more? What if they could know the vast love He has for them—and how He truly desires for them to succeed and fulfill the dreams and purposes that He put in them?

That is the goal of *Dream Big with God*. Many teenagers are good at memorizing Bible verses and learning theological facts such as “God loves me,” but they often haven’t learned the skill of applying that knowledge in their own life. Depending on their spiritual upbringing, they may not even know they should do that. That’s why we have a two-part goal with this material:

1. Give teenagers biblical principles.
2. Show them how to apply these principles to everyday life—specifically how to keep from being trafficked, keep children around them from being trafficked, and how to pursue their dreams in a safe manner.

This is the difference between the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. Our goal is to give teenagers fruit to eat from the tree of life. We are honored to partner with you to do that.

Important notes to teachers

1. *Dream Big with God* covers topics that are emotionally difficult.

You need to be prepared for students who may be traumatized in the classroom. One in three women is a survivor of sexual, physical or emotional abuse, so you will have young survivors in your classes. Talk with your teachers ahead of time about what to do when a youth reacts to the material. It's also important to let teachers know that some of the material might be difficult for them to read and may even cause deep emotional reactions in them if they have survived family or societal abuse. Letting both the teachers and youth know that these reactions exist is important so that re-traumatizing does not occur during the sessions. There are many excellent Christian books and curriculums available to help you minister to your students and teachers. We encourage you to be prepared in case the need arises. Also check with your administrator regarding local procedures and laws for reporting abuse and trafficking.

2. The fine line between awareness and fear.

As a teacher, you want your students to be aware of the dangers of human trafficking, but you do not want them to live in fear. This is a fine line and as you teach you will have to watch and listen to know what your students are thinking and feeling. Teenagers and young adults may hide their feelings more than young children would. Here are suggestions to help you avoid instilling fear in your students as you teach anti-trafficking:

If students show overt signs of fear, talk with them about it. You can meet with them privately or in a group—whatever makes them feel most comfortable. Create a safe place where teenagers and young adults feel comfortable talking with you about their fears. Brainstorm and talk about what specific thoughts are making them afraid. Write down each fear and say you want to work with them to develop a plan they can use to feel safe. Go over each fear and ask for their suggestions about what would help them not be afraid. These might include going places using a buddy system, always letting an adult know where they are, not running off with people they do not know well or who have not proven themselves to be true friends, carrying cell phones, safety whistles, etc. Your answers will depend on your particular circumstances, students' ages, and a host of other needs that only you can determine.

When you have to identify or warn of a danger, counter it with something positive such as, "I am so glad to be your teacher and help you through this." This is the "reality therapy" approach to counseling and problem-solving. The objects, persons, and circumstances that create fears are real, not imaginary, so the answers you give must be real as well and must help create an environment of safety, health, and freedom. That's why the Dream Big anti-trafficking program teaches specific behaviors that can keep them from being trafficked (making wise choices, knowing who they can trust, etc.).

Have teenagers write down their fears and then together with them, look for Bible verses to counter those lies. Help them see that their fears, while real, are contrary to what God's Word says. For example, "God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind"

(2 Timothy 1:7). If you make this an activity and work together with teenagers to come up with specific verses, it will mean more to them than if you just recite the verses to them yourself. Have teenagers write them on papers, decorate them, and hang them where they can see them at home and school. You can also use this as an opportunity for teenagers to memorize the verses they find.

Play worship songs for them—either songs that are Scripture based or even simple songs like “Jesus Loves Me,” that proclaim truths about God.

You and your staff can pray against the spirit of the fear. Pray that teenagers will receive a revelation of God's love and protection that He is providing to them.

3. The full version of *Dream Big With God*.

The version you have here is just 1 session from a 6-session anti-trafficking curriculum that contains many more activities, games, discussion topics, and more. We encourage you to download and teach it to your students. Just go to www.born2fly.org.

Curriculum and Leader's Guide

Objectives: To teach teens:

- It's important to know whom you can trust.
- How to recognize a true friend
- What value a true friend places on you
- What it means to be a friend of God.
- How to be a friend of God.
- Jesus is the truest friend; He can be trusted.
- Friendship with Jesus keeps you safe, healthy, and free as you pursue your dreams.
- Friendship with Jesus can keep you from being trafficked.

Key scripture: "This is my beloved, this is my friend" (Song of Songs 5:16 NIV).

Supplies and materials list: Leader's guide, whiteboard (or chalkboard or poster board), art paper for each student, markers, paper, pens or pencils

1. Trafficking: A real victim's story

Read this example of a trafficked teenager, reminding students that this really happened in the U.S.

Lori (not her real name) is a teenager who lives in the United States. She is a U.S. citizen, had some college education, and a five-month-old child. Lori needed to fix her car so she asked her friend, a man we'll call Greg, if she could borrow some money. She was slowly paying him back when she got arrested for shoplifting. Greg agreed to loan her money—but said she had to work for him to pay him back.

This is how Greg made Lori pay him back. He posted her picture online and sent her to prostitution calls. He sold her for sex to many men. To make sure she would comply, Greg and his colleagues kept her child while she went on prostitution calls. At the end of the day, she had to give them the money she earned and then they returned her child to her. If she did not give them the money, they would not give her back her child.

Eventually the police detained Lori. When she told them her story and showed them text messages confirming it, they set up a sting operation. The next time Lori met Greg to exchange money for her child, the officers arrested him and the other men, and they rescued Lori's child. Greg and his colleagues were charged with sex trafficking. Lori spoke at Greg's sentencing. The prosecutor asked for five to eight years in prison, but the judge was so moved by Lori's testimony that he sentenced Greg to twelve years.

(Excerpted from *Audacious* by Diana Scimone; used here with permission)

Say: Lori is a real teenager just like you. She thought Greg was a friend. She trusted him. But he betrayed her in one of the worst ways imaginable, selling her into sex slavery. The ability to

recognize and know whom you can trust is not just important for staying safe from traffickers, but one of the most important life skills you can have.

Discuss:

- Is it difficult or easy for you to recognize true friends? Why?
- How do you know when a person you meet is a friend? Can you tell by the way they look? Why?
- Read and discuss this quote from an undercover police officer in the U.S. who helps rescue children and teenagers from trafficking:
“You already know that there are people who are evil or manipulative. You hear people talk about them and you know they’re out there. Don’t think they aren’t around you—in your town or city, near your school. Don’t believe that human trafficking can’t happen to you. Most teenagers we rescue never thought it could happen to them. Human trafficking can happen to anyone.”
- As you read that quote, why do you think it’s important to know whom you can trust?

2. Activity: Friend pantomimes

Ask: What does it mean to be a friend? (Allow a few responses.) Team up with one or two other people and think of how you choose your friends. Then create a pantomime to show how to choose a friend (i.e. sharing a common interest, like football/soccer). (Allow students to act out a few pantomimes.) Now create a pantomime to illustrate qualities we should look for in potential friends (i.e. truthful, encourages you in your studies, and so on).

3. Discuss: What are instincts?

Read and discuss this quote from a social work student who hopes to work with youth recovering from trauma and abuse:

“You have instincts that tell you whether something might be safe or unsafe, dangerous or not dangerous. Your instincts guide you in knowing who your true friends are. Instincts help you stay away from deceitful people and deceitful friends, and out of dangerous situations like trafficking and abuse. Your instincts are a safeguard and are a part of your unique identity.

“Traffickers try to get you to stop listening to your instincts that alert you to threats—so that they can get you to do what they want you to do. People who act like your friends can do this, too. That is called peer pressure. Your friends want you to go along with what they are doing, and they pressure you by demeaning or ignoring your instincts that are telling you that what they are doing is wrong or unsafe. Listen to your instincts. They are there for your protection!”

- How would you describe your instincts?
- Can you think of a time when your instincts were warning you about danger? Were they right?
- Do you believe your instincts are wrong?

- Do you believe they are untrustworthy?
- Have your friends ever told you to go along with something that you knew was wrong?
- How do you think your instincts can help you tell a true friend from a false one?

Say: If you hear someone promising you something that sounds too good to be true, ask yourself:

- Are my instincts telling me that this person is trying to deceive me?
- Do I feel threatened by this person?

4. Activity: Dream big! Building your Dream Team

Ask: “What is your biggest dream?” Tell teens you are giving them permission to “dream big.” Encourage them to share a dream that doesn’t depend on how much money they have or don’t have, where they live, or anything.

Share your own big dream. (Be honest and dream big!) This does not have to be a “spiritual” dream, but just something you’ve always dreamed of doing.

Ask: “What is your dream?” Encourage teens to share their dreams aloud, reminding others to be respectful as they listen.

Say: “As you’re going after your dreams, you need a ‘dream team’ to help you. These are true friends and family members who can support you and help you so you can pursue your dream.”

Hand out paper and ask students to list people who can be a part of their Dream Team. “These are people who advise you, teach you, care about you, support you, and encourage you. This may include a school teacher or spiritual leader, a soccer coach, family member, counselor, or advisor. You can also include a special trusted person to contact in case something bad happens to you or someone tried to traffic you. Knowing who is on your Dream Team is an important part of maturing. One of the ways we know who is on our Dream Team—and who isn’t—is learning who we can trust in life.”

5. Activity: Trust line

Have everyone stand up and ask them to imagine a line that crosses the room. One end of the room represents “yes,” while the opposite end of the room represents “no.” The middle represents “unsure.” As you ask each of the questions below, each student should think of their closest friend and move to the point on the line that represents either yes, no, or unsure. Remind them not to say the name of their friend aloud.

Option: If students’ close friends are in the same class, it might prevent them from answering truthfully to themselves and the rest of the class. Instead keep this a private activity. Have students draw a line on a piece of paper, with one end representing “yes,” the opposite end represents “no,” and the middle, “unsure.” Ask students to think of someone they know—without naming them—and mark the line on the paper as you ask the questions.

- Does this friend treat you with love and respect?

- Does this friend treat you with love and respect—even when he or she is having problems or stressed?
- Does this friend always tell you the truth?
- Does this friend always encourage you?
- Does this friend always help you when you need help?
- Does this friend protect you or stand up for you when others try to harm you?
- Does this friend ever try to discourage you or hold you back from your dreams?
- Would this friend respond to all these questions about you as you did for them? Why?

6. Trafficking connection

Remind students that Dream Big With God will help them to stay safe and be successful in following their dreams.

Refer back to Lori's story as you discuss these questions:

- What do human traffickers look like?
- How can knowing who your true friends are keep you safe from traffickers?
- If someone offers you something (like a cell phone or a pair of shoes) for labor or sex, what will you tell them so you can avoid being trafficked?

Point out:

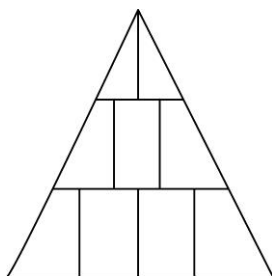
- Human traffickers can look like anyone—even our friends.
- They do not announce themselves as people who are going to trick you or hurt you.
- They can be young or old.
- They can be someone you already know.
- They can be someone you go to school with—another student.
- They are liars who try to convince you to do what they want rather than what is good or best for you.
- They will lie to you over and over again and try to pretend they are your friends.

Discuss these trafficking statistics:

- 1.2 million children under the age of 18 are trafficked each year around the world. (ILO)
- The average age of sex workers around the world is 11. Some are as young as 4 years old.
- Both girls and boys are trafficked.
- When a teenager runs away, within 48 hours she or he is approached by traffickers.
- Human trafficking is the second highest-grossing illegal industry on earth after illegal drugs.
- Estimated global annual profits made from trafficking is US\$31.6 billion. (ILO, UNGIFT).
- In 2006 there were only 5,808 prosecutions and 3,160 convictions throughout the world. (US State Department TIP Report, 2007)
- You can sell a bag of drugs only once but you can sell a person over and over again.

7. Activity: Bad, better, and best relationships

On a whiteboard, chalkboard, or poster, draw this figure for students to copy on paper:



The top represents a good friend and the student; students can write the name of that good friend and their own name in the blocks at the top. On the seven other blocks, students should write traits, characteristics, behaviors, actions, or attitudes they look for in a true friend. As they share their answers with the group, these are some of qualities, behaviors, or attitudes that may emerge as important (if they don't, suggest them): truthful, honest, supportive, loyal, constant, warm, loving, fun to be with (always important for teens), reliable, kind, committed to you.

Ask students what is one thing a friend could do to destroy a relationship with them. Point out that just as good relationships are built on good character qualities and habits, bad relationships are built on bad character foundations: lying, deception, stealing, hurtful words, using drugs or selling them, etc.

Write out these questions ahead of time on small slips of paper and pass out to students to read aloud one at a time. As you discuss the answers be very encouraging; take time to point out what is positive about each person's responses and share your own answers to these questions from your life and experiences.

- Do you have a "safe" or trusted adult you can talk to in your family, school, or community?
- How can you know when it would be all right to leave the safety of your family?
- Sometimes your family might encourage you to leave home. Is that always in your best interest?
- Which of your possessions means the most to you? Why?
- Is being valuable as a person based on what you do, or is it based on who you are? Why?
- Why do traffickers try so hard to get you to do what they want?
- What can you do to make sure your dreams don't get taken from you?
- What is the best way for you to deal with people who offer you something in exchange for work or sex?
- Do you know the National Human Trafficking hotline? (888-3737-8888; encourage teens to put it in their phones)
- Can you think of a scenario when you might have to call the hotline?

8. Scriptures

Say: We're learning about how you can know whom you can trust—and how to tell a true friend from a false one.

Read our key verse: "This is my beloved, this is my friend" (Song of Songs 5:16 NIV).

Say: This verse is talking about Jesus. He is the only friend who will never disappoint you. He will always love you. You can trust Him because He is a true friend.

Read these scriptures or have teens read them:

"'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called the friend of God" (James 2:23 NKJ).

"Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:13-15 NKJ).

- What is the difference between a servant and a friend? Which did Jesus say you are? (His friends)
- How can you be a friend of Jesus? (By loving Him, following Him, believing Him, reading the Bible and learning about Him, by talking to Him in prayer)
- Is friendship with Jesus based on what you do or who you are? (who you are; you can never "do" enough to be friends with Jesus. He invites you to be His friend, and by accepting that invitation, you are His friend. Friendship with Jesus is not based on doing or performing.)

Explain to teens that having a close friendship with Jesus can help keep them from being trafficked because He will help them know who they can trust in life.

Read our key verse again. Explain that in the Bible, God often uses natural examples to define a spiritual principle. Marriage is the most intimate of all relationships.

- A couple gets married because they are more than friends.
- They are connected on an emotional level that is higher than any other human relationship.
- When two people are in love they want to spend the rest of their lives together.
- They want nothing but death to separate them.
- They want this person to be the first one they see in the morning and the last one they see at night.
- Their love is so strong that they can't seem to get close enough.
- They can rest in each other's embrace knowing they are loved and accepted by the other.

This is the relationship that the Lord desires with us. Share verses such as Isaiah 54:5, Revelation 19:7-9, Matthew 9:15, and Matthew 25:1-13 that show Jesus is our bridegroom. This may be a difficult concept for youth to understand, particularly boys and young men, but ask the Holy

Spirit to help them. This is a key concept for believers to understand. Explain that Song of Songs is a book about this special relationship with Jesus.

9. Prayer time

As you play soft instrumental music, have teens rest quietly in prayer asking Jesus to help them understand how He is their true friend and their bridegroom king. Quietly read the above verses again. Remind them if they don't understand this concept that they can ask Him to explain it to them Himself. Have them write what He tells them or draw what He shows them.