

Soaring Higher (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 children 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 children 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 children 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 children 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 Soaring Higher curriculum, which is 6 sessions.

The goal of this curriculum is to help children 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.

Children 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 children 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 *Soaring Higher*. Many children 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 children 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 children fruit to eat from the tree of life. We are honored to partner with you to do that.

Important notes to teachers

1. *Soaring Higher* may bring up topics that are emotionally difficult.

This curriculum does not specifically mention trafficking but you may of course include it according to the age of your students. If you do, 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. Children 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 children 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 *Soaring Higher* teaches specific behaviors that can keep them from being trafficked (making wise choices, knowing who they can trust, etc.).

Have children 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 children to come up with specific verses, it will mean more to them than if you just recite the verses to them yourself. Have children 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 children 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 children will receive a revelation of God's love and protection that He is providing to them.

3. The full version of *Soaring Higher*.

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 children:

- It's important to know who your true friends are.
- How to recognize a true friend
- What a "dream thief" is and what such a person wants to take from you
- Knowing what a true friend is can help keep you safe.
- What it means to be a friend of God.
- How to be a friend of God.
- Jesus is the truest friend.
- Friendship with Jesus keeps you safe, healthy and free as you pursue your dreams.

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

Supplies and materials: Framed photos; paper, crayons or markers, instrumental worship music

Before class: Read the session notes and choose the questions you think will be most appropriate for your particular group. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you ways to customize the lesson for your class.

1. Welcome: It's time to dream big!

Explain to children that today you are going to talk about dreaming big.

Ask: "When I say the word *dreams*, what do you think of?" Explain that there are two kinds of dreams: dreams we dream at night, and the dreams of our heart.

Ask: "What is your biggest dream?" Tell children 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?"

2. Activity: Draw your dreams.

Pass out paper. On one side of the paper, have children draw a picture to illustrate their big dream. If time allows, ask children to share their dreams either to the entire class or in small groups. Remind children to respect others' dreams.

3. True friends or dream thieves?

Explain that there are two kinds of people: Those who help us follow our dreams (true friends) and those who try to steal our dreams—"dream thieves."

Choose some of these questions to discuss:

- What are the qualities of a true friend?
- How do you know one?

- What is a dream thief? (Not a true friend; someone who pretends to be, but who tricks you)
- What does a dream thief look like?
- How do you know when a person you meet is a friend? Can you tell by the way they look?
- What is one word you would use to describe your best friend?
- (For older children) Without mentioning any names, can you think of someone you know who may not be a true friend?
- What is unconditional love? How do friends show this?
- What are some different kinds of friendship?
- Is everyone your best friend?
- How do you know when someone is your best friend versus an acquaintance?
- Do friends sometimes disappoint you, even your best friend?

4. Scripture

Say: Today we will learn what it means to be a friend of Jesus—and how that will help us pursue our dreams and stay safe.

Read key verse: “This is my beloved, this is my friend” (Song of Songs 5:16 NIV). Explain and discuss with children:

- 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.

Ask children, “How do you think being a friend of Jesus will help you pursue your dreams? How could it help you stay safe?”

5. Activity: Make a friendship frame

Show framed pictures you have brought from home pointing out the frames and the pictures inside. Have children take paper they drew their dreams on, turn it over and draw a line down the middle to divide it into two sections. On one half, draw a large frame. They can create this however they want. Inside this frame have children draw several of their true friends—reminding them about what you just discussed. These can be family members or people outside their families. They can include themselves in the picture, too, if they wish.

Read these scriptures to children or have them read them aloud:

“‘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 friend)
- How can you be a friend of Jesus? (By loving Him, following Him, believing Him, spending time with Him, reading the Bible and learning about Him, by talking to Him in prayer, etc.)
- 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 children that having a close friendship with Jesus can help keep them from being hurt. He will help them know who they can trust in life.

6. Prayer time

Play soft instrumental worship music in the background. Tell children they are going to listen quietly for Jesus' voice. Explain that Jesus does not shout at us but speaks in a “still, small voice,” so we have to listen carefully for it. Remind them that sometimes He speaks with words and other times with pictures. Encourage them to tell Jesus they want to be His friend. Ask Him to show them a picture of Himself and them—as friends. Allow time for children to hear God and see with their spiritual eyes (Ephesians 1:18). Afterward have children share what they heard Him say and what they saw. Encourage them in what they share.

7. Activity: Friendship frame with Jesus

On the other half of their drawing paper, have children create a second friendship frame, this time drawing a picture of themselves with Jesus. If He told them something specific during prayer time, they can write it on their friendship frame.