



HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON

Rated: PG
Running Time: 98 minutes

Themes: Bravery, compassion, mercy, respect for life, loyalty, gentleness, patience, father/son tension from unfulfilled expectations, forgiveness, turning enemies into friends, taking time to understand those who are different



Cautions: Scenes of peril, fiery dragon attacks and a few lost limbs. Vikings drink grog and make passing pleas to gods of Norse mythology (Odin, Thor). Iffy language is limited to “butts,” “screwed up,” “all h--- is gonna break loose,” plus references to soiled undies and having turned a woman’s breastplate into helmets. An assertive girl kisses a boy.

Story Summary

On the island hamlet of Berk, Vikings battle livestock-pilfering lizards, which makes burly dragon slayers local heroes. Hiccup longs for his first kill. But the gangly teen lacks the size and skill of his alpha dad, who has made his son the blacksmith’s apprentice to keep him out of harm’s way. During a chaotic battle, Hiccup downs an elusive Night Fury with a homemade weapon. He finds the creature in a secluded valley, bound and helpless, and intends to earn everyone’s respect by finishing it off. But Hiccup can’t bring himself to do it, so he sets the dragon free.

However, the injured Night Fury can’t fly out of the rock-walled valley, which gives the boy time to earn its trust in secret. Despite tense moments, the beast he calls Toothless eventually becomes a faithful friend—part lapdog, part trusty steed. And wouldn’t you know it, just as Hiccup decides he no longer wants to kill dragons, his dad acquiesces to his scrawny son’s original desire and enrolls him in dragon training. Luckily, there’s more than one way to subdue a fire-breathing reptile, and Hiccup applies lessons learned from his clandestine meetings with Toothless to amaze (and frustrate) his mace-wielding peers.

A fiercely competitive tomboy named Astrid uncovers Hiccup’s secret, but a wild ride on Toothless convinces her not to tell anyone. During that flight, Astrid and Hiccup happen upon the dragons’ hive-like

lair and the most enormous monster they’ve ever seen—a queen that’s been

forcing smaller dragons to bring her food. When

Hiccup’s father learns of the nest, he mobilizes the fleet for a climactic show-

down, unprepared for the challenge awaiting them. It’s up to Hiccup and his classmates—mounted on dragons—to get there before it’s too late. In the process, they help their elders realize that enemies can become friends if we just take time to understand them better.

Family Activity

Gobber tells his young recruits that a Viking’s most valuable weapon is his shield. Help your child design his or her very own Viking shield. Cut out a round piece of cardboard and let your imaginations take over. Use aluminum foil for the metallic parts, or add dimension with bottle cap bolts. When you’re done, attach a sturdy strip of cardboard to the back as a handle. Then read about the full armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-18, giving special attention to the shield of faith described in verse 16.

Talking Points

1. Some people might view Hiccup’s inability to kill the Night Fury as a weakness. Explain why mercy is a strength—one of several mentioned in Colossians 3:12-14. Talk about the other virtues in that list as they apply to characters and situations in the film.

2. Ask, “What things did Hiccup learn about dragons from spending time with Toothless that books couldn’t teach him?” See how many you can remember, and discuss how his example can help us in our own relationships.

3. Hiccup is desperate to fit in and gain his father’s approval. Ask your child, “Whose approval means a lot to you?” See whether they value the respect of peers, parents, teachers, God (2 Corinthians 10:18; Romans 12:1, 14:17-18), etc. Look for ways to affirm your child, pointing out talents and reinforcing positive character traits.

4. By the end of the film, Gobber, Toothless and Hiccup all wear prosthetics. Your child may have questions about what happens when people lose a limb. Do a little research together. You may even want to read the testimony of Christian surfer Bethany Hamilton, the 13-year-old shark-attack victim who lost her arm but not her faith. —by Bob Smithouser





COLOR ME



Turn the word on the top of each column into the word on the bottom by changing one letter on every line (each change should make another real word). Then circle as many words as you can that relate to things you observed in the movie!

VIKING WORDQUEST

Example: HORNS

1. TIRE

2. SOAR

CORNS

CORDS

CARDS

FILM

SLAB

3. BEAST

4. WING

5. CLUB

ROOST

BEND

FLAG

