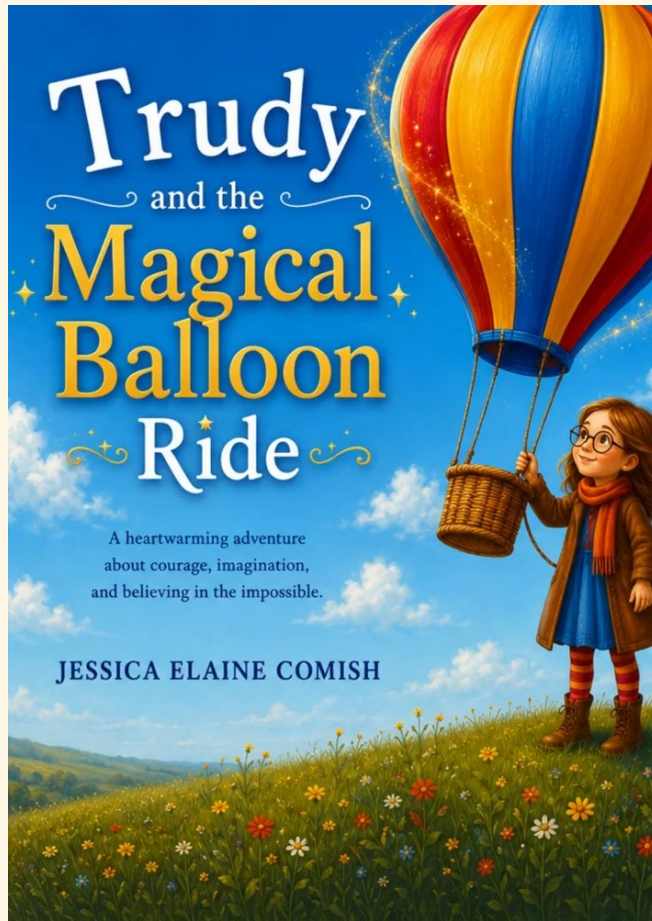


TEACHER & FAMILY ACTIVITY GUIDE



Trudy and the Magical Balloon Ride

by Jessica Elaine Comish

Discussion questions, vocabulary and hands-on activities for each part of the story. Ages 4-10.

How to use this guide

This guide follows the story in five parts. For each part you'll find a short summary, discussion questions, three vocabulary words and an activity. Use it for read-alouds, small groups, homeschool, or bedtime. There are no wrong answers - the goal is wonder, kindness and conversation.

Big ideas in the story

- Courage - trying something new even when you don't know where it leads.
- Remembering your dreams - dreams can wait for us; they are not lost.
- Resilience - Trudy walks with a cane and still adventures boldly.
- Sharing - our stories can help others remember their own dreams.

Before reading

- Look at the cover. Where do you think the balloon is going?
- What is a dream? Can a dream be something you hope for, not just something you see while sleeping?
- If you received a magical invitation, who would you hope it was from?

Online extras

Read the book page by page, hear it read aloud, choose a bonus ending, chat with Trudy, Liora and the Old Otter, and tuck a dream into Liora's Dream Jar on the book's website.

The Invitation



A mysterious yellow envelope invites Trudy on a journey beyond the clouds. With her scarf, cane and little leather satchel, she steps into a shimmering balloon and floats away - leaving her doubts behind.

Let's talk

- The invitation says “Pack lightly, bring wonder, and follow the wind.” What would you pack?
- Trudy didn't know where she was going, but she knew she was going. Why do you think she said yes?
- The balloon rose “past her own doubts.” What does it mean to leave a doubt behind?
- Have you ever tried something new even though you felt a little nervous? How did it feel afterwards?

Word garden

shimmered	shone with a soft, wavering light
satchel	a bag with a long strap
doubt	a feeling of not being sure

Activity: Write and decorate your own invitation to an adventure. Where does it lead?
Seal it with your own secret symbol, like the spiral on Trudy's envelope.

The Forest That Remembers



The balloon drifts down to a musical forest, where a glowing creature named Liora welcomes Trudy as her guide, a gentle memory elephant helps her feel that her dreams are “still here, still hers,” and a golden grove brings back happy memories.

Let's talk

- Liora says, “The forest remembers those who remember themselves.” What do you think that means?
- Why might the author have chosen an elephant to help Trudy remember?
- In the grove Trudy remembers a lullaby, cinnamon and paint. What smells or sounds bring back happy memories for you?
- How do you think Trudy felt when she said, “I remember”?

Word garden

sentinel	a guard who keeps watch
luminous	giving off light; glowing
grove	a small group of trees

Activity: Memory Map: draw a path with five stops. At each stop, draw a happy memory - a place, a smell, a song, a person and a favourite thing you love to do.

The Mirror of Lost Dreams



At a still, glowing pool, Trudy sees dreams she once set down: being an artist, living by the ocean writing stories, and teaching through joy. A glowing dream-orb turns into a quill wrapped in seaweed and thyme.

Let's talk

- Liora says you must look “only if your heart is soft enough to see without shame.” Why might looking at old dreams feel hard?
- Which of Trudy’s three dreams would you most like to live? Why?
- What does “A dream delayed is not a dream denied” mean? Can you say it in your own words?
- Why do you think the dream turned into a quill and not something else?

Word garden

crystalline	clear and sparkly like crystal
orb	a round ball, often glowing
delayed	happening later than planned

Activity: Dream Orbs: cut out three paper circles. On each, draw or write a dream you have. Hang them as a mobile or pop one into the Dream Jar on the book’s website.

The Ocean Cottage



The balloon carries Trudy to the ocean cottage she once dreamed of. A kind old sea otter in a cardigan hands her a blank book: “You’ve lived the chapters. Now write them.” Trudy writes a story of dolphins, whales and a silver fish.

Let’s talk

- The otter says, “You’re late. But right on time.” How can someone be late and on time at once?
- Describe the cottage using three of your five senses.
- Trudy cried while writing, “not of sadness, but relief.” What is relief? When have you felt it?
- Why do new stars appear in the sky when Trudy writes?

Word garden

spectacles	another word for glasses
myth	a story that explains something with magic or wonder
relief	a calm, happy feeling when a worry goes away

Activity: Blank Book Challenge: fold paper into a mini book. Like Trudy, write a short story about something you love - the ocean, an animal, or a dream of your own.

Sharing the Stories



Trudy floats to a busy village where dreams are nearly forgotten. Under a willow tree she reads her stories to the children, flowers bloom, and the village changes. Then she sets off for the next town.

Let's talk

- Why do you think the children noticed Trudy first?
- Trudy had “no signs, no speeches.” How did she still change the village?
- How did the village feel different after Trudy’s visit?
- Who could you share a story or a kind word with this week?

Word garden

nestled	tucked in a cozy, sheltered place
sacred	very special and worthy of respect
willow	a tree with long, drooping branches

Activity: Story Circle: sit in a circle like the children under the willow tree. Each person adds one sentence to a shared story about where Trudy’s balloon goes next.

Keep the dream glowing

Big questions

- Which part of Trudy's journey was your favourite? Why?
- How did Trudy change from the first page to the last?
- Liora, the elephant and the otter all helped Trudy. Who helps you remember who you are?
- What dream of yours would you like to keep safe until you're ready?

Extension activities

- Design your balloon: draw a hot-air balloon that shows who you are - colours, patterns and a basket full of things you love.
- Classroom Dream Jar: each child writes a dream on a slip of paper. Read a few aloud (with permission) and celebrate them.
- Write a Dreamer's Blessing: like the one at the end of the book, write a short blessing for a friend or family member.
- Next town: Liora asks, "Ready for the next town?" Write or draw what happens when Trudy lands there.

The Dreamer's Blessing

"Let your curiosity be your compass. Let kindness be your map... You, dear one, are made of dreams. And dreams were born to fly."

Thank you for sharing Trudy's journey with your readers. - Jessica Elaine Comish