PLEASE LEAVE THE BABIES ALONE!
Please leave the babies alone!

Each year at this time, thousands of well-meaning people "rescue" young birds, mistakenly thinking that the birds have been abandoned. In fact, these people are reducing the young birds' chances for survival. Often, these fledglings are in the process of learning to leave the nest. With the parent birds' help, the babies are finding out how to fend for themselves—and their parents are seldom far away from them.

Discuss with students some of the things they can do right now to prepare themselves for their life-style as adults. Next, have them consider what a young bird might do to prepare for its adult life in the wild. How might a fledgling be harmed when humans interfere with this learning process?

Have students consider what they would do if they found a baby bird on the ground? Would they try to return it to the nest? (The old belief that a parent bird will automatically reject a baby that has been touched by humans is not true.) Would they try to place it in a bush or other area away from predators? What if a free-roaming pet were threatening the young bird's safety?

Each spring, countless baby birds are literally "killed with kindness" by people who were only trying to help. Remind your students that if they really want to help wild birds, please leave the babies alone!