

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Putting God First” the High School Sunday school lesson for January 3, 2015. The lesson is found on page 31 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

# the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Meadowlark Lemon made a name for himself by clowning around. For 24 years, he performed amazing basketball feats such as half-court hook shots and blind passes in his position on the world-famous, professional basketball team called the Harlem Globetrotters. He played an estimated 16,000 games in over 100 countries, entertaining world leaders and millions of fans with his skills as both an athlete and a comedian. It seems fitting that he was inducted into both the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and the International Clown Hall of Fame. NBA great Will Chamberlain made the claim that “Meadowlark was the most sensational, awesome, incredible basketball player I’ve ever seen.”

The basketball legend passed away last Sunday at the age of 83. And in the roughly 1,600 words devoted to his obituary online in the *New York Times* and other media outlets, only about 20 talk about the even more incredible and awesome work he was devoted to in the last quarter-century of his life as an ordained Christian minister and founder of Meadowlark Lemon Ministries, spreading the gospel message of hope to schoolchildren, veterans, juvenile offenders, those suffering with addictions, Native Americans, college students, and corporations. For Lemon, his basketball celebrity was most valuable as a path to audiences he would never otherwise have been able to reach.

His ministry had a special focus on young people, particularly those whose choices had resulted in time in prisons or detention centers. He encouraged them with the message that “Life’s most meaningless statistic is the half-time score, and as far as I’m concerned, it’s always half-time.” He told them that God had a plan for them, a plan that included forgiveness and the chance to start over and make good choices. “Make up your mind to finish strong,” he said ([www.meadowlarklemon.org/ministry/](http://www.meadowlarklemon.org/ministry/)).

And that’s exactly what he did.

*As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:*

**Basketball was a dream and a passion for Meadowlark Lemon. What would you name as one of your dreams or passions?**

**At the height of his career, Lemon was playing an average of 300 basketball games a year—that’s almost a game every day! Imagine the discipline and training required to play any sport to that extent. What do you think would be required? What is something you practice or train for? How often do you practice? Now consider the training and practice involved in developing faith in Christ. How does that compare to other skills you work on in your life?**

**Lemon devoted more years of his adult life to Christian ministry than to basketball, yet his career in basketball is what dominates the news stories about him. What does this mean to you?**

**People are committed to a number of possessions, people, and pursuits. But as followers of God, we are called to have an extreme commitment to Him. Our Bible text shows three ways we are called to demonstrate that commitment.**



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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