

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Making a Difference in Your School” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for August 14, 2016. The lesson is found on page 69 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



They work almost every day, all year round, no matter what is going on in their lives. They follow grueling training schedules. They have almost an obsessive drive to perform perfectly. They are filled with grit, determination, and confidence. And they are teenage girls.

Three members of the gold-medal Olympic women’s gymnastics team are still in their teens (Simone Biles, 19; Madison Kocian, 19; and Laurie Hernandez, 16), and all of them have been competing since they were little girls. While other teenage girls right now might be worried about heading back to school, these young women have been focusing on their routines in the light of worldwide attention. Their stories and their performances have inspired millions watching them as they consistently performed to the best of their ability, smashing their competition in the team final this past Tuesday night by a point margin (more than 8 points) that was the greatest it’s been since 1960.

And though they take themselves very seriously on the floor, when not competing the girls have been giggling in interviews, taking selfies, chasing after other Olympic stars, and generally having a fabulous time. In short, they’ve been acting like normal teenage girls.

One might wonder what drives these young competitors to work so hard and consistently perform at a world-class level. For at least one member of the team (and others definitely agree with her), the answer seems clear (from the Twitter feed of Laurie Hernandez): “In the happy moments, praise God. In the hard times, seek God. In the quiet moments, trust God. In every moment, thank God.”

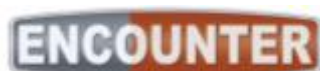
As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above article to read. Then discuss it in this way:

For the teenagers on the Olympic teams, their main job right now is to compete in their sport. But all of them have struggled to maintain a balance between their education and their athletic training. What do you consider to be your primary job right now? How hard do you work at maintaining education as a priority? Explain your reasons for your answer.

Most teenagers place as much importance on learning as they do on other areas of their lives. Would you agree or disagree with that statement? Why?

For Laurie Hernandez and other athletes, their faith in God has a big impact on their attitudes as they train and as they perform. How does your faith impact your attitude toward your education? Do you think other students can tell you are a Christian by the way you act in school? Does it really matter?

At times, school may seem like it is a waste of time and not as important as other things we want to do, but the Bible tells us that learning *is* important. Let’s see what the book of Proverbs has to say about the type of attitude we ought to have toward learning.



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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