How do ordinary people achieve extraordinary goals? *The Gabby Douglas Story*, a Lifetime® Original Movie, tells the remarkable story of how Gabrielle Douglas defied the odds to become a two-time Olympic gold medalist in gymnastics at the young age of 16. Featuring actual footage of her incredible Olympic performances, Gabby’s inspiring story comes to life in this film. Raised primarily by a single mom who has been her biggest motivator and supporter, Gabby was determined to excel in gymnastics despite many challenges along the way. But how did she accomplish her dream, becoming the first African American to win individual all-around gold and the first American to win gold in both the individual all-around and team competitions in gymnastics? This film tells Gabby’s Olympic tale, a story of sacrifice and triumph, sportsmanship and teamwork. It provides a great road map for young people to think about how to “Raise the Bar” in their own lives and in their own communities.

“TURN YOUR DREAM INTO YOUR GOAL.” – GABBY DOUGLAS
CURRICULUM LINKS

*The Gabby Douglas Story* is an inspirational film suitable for sixth-graders and above. It is a good fit with social studies, current events, physical education, and sports and society courses, among others. It is also a great film for after-school programs and activities.

KEY TERMS

Students can define following terms used in this program and/or discuss their meaning in a group setting to gain insights into the key themes of the film.

- advocate
- concentration
- determination
- exceptional
- fate
- metabolic
- metaphor
- realization

VIEWING ACTIVITY

As you watch, think about some of the quotes or ideas you learn. Write down some of your favorite quotes or ideas from the film during or after you watch and reflect on what you learned from Gabby’s story.

GABRIELLE DOUGLAS QUICK FACTS

- 2012 All-Around Olympic Gold Medalist
- 2012 Olympic Team Gold Medalist
- 2012 USA Women’s Olympic Team Member
- 2011 Senior Women’s National Team Member
- 2011 USA World Champion Team Member

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Respond to a few or all of these questions in a discussion/group setting or in writing to further explore Gabby’s story and the themes of the film.

1. Gabby’s mother says in the film, “Today should always be better than yesterday.” What do you think this idea means and how did it inspire Gabby?

2. Gabby’s mother uses a “vision board” to map out future goals and dreams for her family. Each member of the family contributes to the vision board, which creates a sense of unity for the family. How would you create your vision board? What would you include on your board?

3. What role do Gabby’s siblings play in her life? How did they help her achieve her goals?

4. What is “the kip” and what is the “Amanar vault,” and why are they so important in gymnastics? How did Gabby master them?

5. What kinds of struggles did Gabby face along her road to Olympic gold? How did she deal with these hurdles?
6. Why do you think training with Coach Chow was so important to Gabby? How was he different from her other coach?

7. Why did Gabby decide to quit gymnastics several months before the Olympics? Why do you think she decided not to quit? Have you ever thought about quitting something but decided to persevere? (Look up the definition of that word if you are not familiar with it.)

8. Throughout the film, we see many examples of Gabby’s positive sportsmanship. What is sportsmanship? Why is it important in sports to be competitive but also to have good sportsmanship?

9. At some points in the film Gabby talks about things that happen in her life as “fate.” What is fate? Do you believe in this concept? Aside from fate, what personal characteristics of Gabby’s do you think contributed to her success?

**GABBY DOUGLAS: IN HER OWN WORDS**

Below are three quotes from Gabby’s book. Choose one of these quotes and write an essay responding to the quote. What does the quote mean to you, and how does it apply to your life? (If you choose #3, think about a motto or set of words that have meaning for you. If you answer #4, think about someone in your life you have needed to forgive. Was it easy or difficult? Why is forgiveness important?)

1. “**So many times in life, we’re faced with a choice:** When a task becomes super difficult, will we flip out and quit, or will we stay focused and keep fighting?”

2. “**Beginnings and endings, endings and beginnings** – that’s just the way life goes. And whether or not we like what happens after we’ve taken a courageous step forward, we can always count on one thing: The next experience will forever change us.”

3. “**Grace, Gold, Glory.** Those three little words now have the biggest meaning for me.”

4. “**Everyone makes mistakes.** For most of my childhood, that’s what I’ve told myself whenever I’ve thought about my father. I’ve wanted to forgive him and start fresh.”

**BOOK CITATION:** Douglas, Gabrielle and Michelle Burford. Grace, Gold, and Glory: My Leap of Faith. (Zonderkidz, 2013). (The book is available at major retailers in stores and online. Also see Gabby’s book Raising the Bar. (Zonderkidz, 2013). Educators and parents may want to have students read these books for additional insights into Gabby’s story.)
ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

1. **Raising the Bar.** Gabby's story can inspire young people to “Raise the Bar” in their own lives and make a pledge to make positive changes in their own communities and schools. Students can create pledge cards to write down how they plan to “Raise the Bar” in 2014. Have students revisit these pledges at the end of the school year.

2. **Olympic Gold History.** As we learn from the film, Gabby took home two gold medals at the 2012 Olympics. Research her gymnastics history and create a one-sheet or visual presentation with key statistics. Students can also choose another Olympic gold winner, research their story, and create a presentation about the athlete they picked, their key stats, and their place in Olympic history.

3. **Vision Board.** Students are invited to create their own “vision boards” and share them with their classmates and family. The vision board becomes a permanent piece of the classroom activities and is updated quarterly to reflect new goals and dreams.

**WEBSITES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Learn more on Lifetime.com: [www.mylifetime.com](http://www.mylifetime.com)

Gabrielle Douglas Official site: [http://gabrielledouglas.com](http://gabrielledouglas.com)


For educational copies of the film, please email publicaffairs@aenetworks.com.