

Learning Guide #6 For Watching the Olympic Games/Sporting Events with Children

What Sacrifices Do We Have To Make In Order To Do Great Things?

Watching the Olympic Games or a sports event can be a valuable learning experience for young people. The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) has developed a series of learning guides for adults and children to use while watching sports on television or in person to promote healthy dialogue. This guide suggests certain observations and presents several questions to discuss together. The learning guide concludes with a brief summary of important facts regarding the topic.

Observation and discussion questions: What Sacrifices Do We Have To Make In Order To Do Great Things

While you watch the Olympic Games or a sports event:

- What sacrifices do you think these athletes have made to get to the Olympic Games?
- Have you ever had to make a choice between playing your sport and doing something else that would be fun? How did you decide?
- Can you think of other people in these athletes' lives who have made sacrifices to help them get there?
- What have the athletes and their families given up?
- Do you think they are comfortable with the sacrifices they have made?
- Have you ever had to make a sacrifice for something you do that's important to you? At school? In music? For your team?
- What did that feel like to you? How did you deal with it?
- Can you think of a sacrifice your family has made for you that has helped you achieve something you wanted?

Lesson Conclusion

Successful athletes realize that sacrifice is part of competitive sport. Young athletes give up alternative activities to excel in one particular area. Often educational experiences are modified and social experiences are limited to their sport, and coaching relationships. Parents and families of athletes make many sacrifices as well: carpooling, washing uniforms, preparing two dinners — one for a child involved in sport and one for the rest of the family — as well as attending practices, games and competition. There are also financial sacrifices families make to support the travel and training expenses of talented athletes. Most sport psychology consultants agree that the key to whether a sport experience has been worthwhile is whether the athlete has had the opportunity to grow and develop as a person. It is often the case that when parents are overly invested or identified with their child's success as an athlete, the experience may be considered a failure — regardless of outcome. Most parents support their child's experiences in sports because when done right, the experience often can do more than teach a child a particular physical skill. It can also teach the child some important life lessons.

AASP encourages adults to do their part to create a supportive youth sport environment so children will develop a lifelong interest in physical activity and sports. By teaching fundamental sporting principles, you can help children develop winning attitudes, both in sports and throughout life.

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The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes the ethical practice, science and advocacy of sport and exercise psychology. Founded in 1986, AASP is an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization that offers certification to qualified professionals who practice sport and exercise psychology. With more than 1,200 members in 28 countries, AASP is a worldwide leader, sharing research and resources with the public via its Web site, www.appliedsportpsych.org.

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