

# KNOCKING DOWN THE FENCES

## EXPLORATION GUIDE

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*The W* with Megan Harrington & Meg Shutzer  
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# 1

In 2016, AJ Andrews was the first African American female athlete to win the coveted Rawlings Gold Glove, an award given to the best professional male fielders in Major League Baseball. With this award, AJ became a pioneer for women in sports.

**Metaphorically, AJ knocked down a fence or barrier that had stood tall for 59 years. She paved the way for others in her sport. What “firsts” have you accomplished? Who has paved the way for you? Who has motivated and inspired you?**

# 2

Throughout the film, AJ showcases her incredible work ethic and unwillingness to let outside circumstances determine her fate. In *The W*, filmmaker Meg Shutzer says “There’s this myth in America that if you work really hard, you’re going to get what it is you’re working for.”

**Is this true for AJ? Has she reinforced or debunked this myth in anyway? What obstacles have held her back? How do you work to overcome these obstacles in your own life?**

# 3

Beth Torina, a former head softball coach, recalls her first time meeting AJ. A ball was hit over AJ’s head and she dove head first into a fence to catch a it, albeit unsuccessfully. Beth said AJ’s attempt to catch that ball spoke volumes about her. AJ also mentions that she was “discovered” when an LSU recruiter was walking by the ballpark as she was diving to catch a ball.

**What do your actions say about you, even when you don’t know who’s watching? How can God use a single moment to create opportunity for your future?**

# 4

AJ makes less than \$15,000 a year as a professional softball player and must supplement her meager income with side jobs, while her male counterparts make 650 times what she makes. It seems that the industry is more willing to pay female athletes to model than to play their sport.

**Who benefits from the structure of this industry? Why are female professional athletes often regarded as ‘second class’ athletes? What might those who love sports do to remedy this inequity?**