Grandparents and Special Friends Day

Lanii enjoying some special time together with her Grandmother. See page 7 for details.
Lent - a time to ‘grapple with grace’.

Now Thomas, one of the twelve ... was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.”  John 20:24-25 (RSV)

In one of my Christian Studies classes a few years ago I showed an interview with Bono from the rock-band U2, talking about his faith and work towards alleviating world poverty through campaigns such as Make Poverty History. He used a term that immediately caught my attention when he talked about Christians ‘grappling with grace’. In the context of this interview he was criticising the church by suggesting not enough of us ‘grapple with grace’ when it comes to the big issues of poverty, AIDS and so on.

However, I identified on a much more personal level. Circumstances within my own life and that of family and friends have created occasions where I have had to ‘grapple with grace’. The constant bombardments of terrible news stories from around the world make me have to ‘grapple with grace’. Severe illness and the unexpected death of loved ones make me ‘grapple with grace’. It seems that the circumstances of life constantly bring an avalanche of issues that we need to grapple with from a biblical worldview. I think I have always been a ‘closet grappler’ – I always have more questions than answers about my faith. I have always questioned the way I and other Christians live in the world. I am often challenged by the dualism that I often accept in my own values and lifestyle. However, despite this, I have always had a sure and solid belief in God and the biblical story. Thankfully ‘grappling with grace’ does not necessarily lead to doubt!

I am proud of the fact that MECS, and other Christian schools are in the business of helping our students ‘grapple with grace’. Our task is not to protect them from the difficulties and challenges of life, but to help them understand that God’s grace will be sufficient in all circumstances. This is a difficult task because often the circumstances of life seem to be in contradiction to what as Christians we hope and believe in. Things such as idolatry, selfishness and greed lead to governments and individuals pursuing actions that lead to the injury and the marginalisation of others. Christians are not spared heartache and disappointment – and these things can lead us to question the way God works in the world and the promise of grace in our own lives.

During this time of Lent, as we prepare to recall the events of Jesus’ death and resurrection, I am always drawn to the character of Thomas. I feel a bit sorry for Thomas; one bible commentator suggests that “hard-headed scepticism can hardly go further than this” when commenting on Thomas’ need to see and touch for himself the nail marks in Jesus’ hands. Yet to me, I see someone grappling with grace, not a sceptic! How can this be? Is this true? Is he really who he says he is? Was this really necessary on my account? Wasn’t there another way? Will others believe this? What will others think of me if I believe without proof? How will this truth affect my life? What does this mean for the way things are? I’m sure we all recognise the questions that may have been going through Thomas’ head as we have worked through our own salvation!

Easter and this time of preparation known as Lent, perhaps more than other time, is a season for ‘grappling with grace’ – to understand the full implications of Jesus’ death and resurrection for the human story, the world, but most importantly for every aspect of our own lives. As you spend time over the next few weeks remembering and celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, may you be challenged to think anew and to grapple with how the amazing grace of God changes everything!

Narelle
MECS Principal

Parent Teacher Interviews and Parent Teacher Online March 25-28

The Parent Teacher Interviews are being conducted on Tuesday 25, Thursday 27 and Friday 28 March for all students.

For parents who have a current email address on our database, you will have received an email with your user name (parent surname) and a unique password. If you have not received this email, please contact the office for it to be sent again.

If you have chosen not to receive electronic correspondence from our office, a letter was mailed to you. You will be able to contact our admin staff (main office or Senior School office) who will be able to book these online for you.

The PTO booking system will be accessible from March 17 at 4pm and you can access the PTO site by following the Parent Teacher Interview links on the school’s website www.mecs.vic.edu.au under ‘Updates’ or ‘Quick Links’ towards the bottom of the page.

Enjoy booking your interviews!

Corrie
Admin Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Primary &amp; Middle School</th>
<th>Senior School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues 25 March</td>
<td>4-6pm</td>
<td>3:40-8:40pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thrus 27 March</td>
<td>4-9pm (no appointments from 6-7pm)</td>
<td>3:40-8:40pm  (no appointments from 6-7pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 28 March</td>
<td>9am-1pm (no appointments from 11-11:30am)</td>
<td>9am-1:10pm (no appointments from 11-11:30am)</td>
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**Grandparents and Special Friends Day**

Although I mentioned it in last week’s Sketcher’s Scoop, can I express my appreciation once again for the fabulous Grandparents and Special Friends Day that was held last Thursday. The sense of pride in our community was greatly evident as grandparents expressed their joy and thanks for providing such a great place for their grandchildren to enjoy each day, as well as the way in which the students were so keen to ‘show off’ their classrooms and special activities to their visitors. Certainly the day lived up to expectations!

**Middle School Camps**

I had the privilege last week of getting around to most of the middle school camps! What I saw was an impressive bunch of students and teachers enjoying a variety of challenging and interesting activities. Whether it was abseiling down a tower at Clifford Park Scout Camp, being challenged about the seductive nature of advertising and the media, or navigating their way around the city, students were engaged in a range of learning experiences that you can’t get in the normal classroom environment. Such experiences are pivotal to the way we ‘do’ education here at MECS as we seek to unwrap and unravel the world in which we live.

**Year 8 Inspiring Girls Camp**

On Inspiring Girls camp, we got to taste new foods and learn about healthy eating. We got to do craft and learn about the wise mind. We got to go to the pools & we took heaps of pictures with an underwater camera! The food on camp was amazing! We had great cooks. They were Krista and Fiona - we were very lucky. Inspiring Girls camp is about challenging yourself and stepping out of your comfort zone.

**Jemma & Emily**

Inspiring Girls Camp is dedicated to helping girls find their inner confidence and to help them see that they are unique and special in their own way. We may not have been on camp the whole week, but the Monday and Tuesday at school was surprisingly quite fun. We aren’t allowed to say much about the camp, as what we do on camp is supposed to be a surprise, but, I’m just saying, Monday and Tuesday were great. On Wednesday, we went to a lodge to stay for two nights. On the camp, we saw a side of the teachers that we never knew existed. It was great; every night was pretty much a girl’s night, wandering around in our PJs and being able to be ourselves. I think that Inspiring Girls Camp had an important and great impact on everyone, and hopefully it will continue to affect girls for years to come, as much as it affected us.

**Bethany & Sarah**

**Staff Devotions**

We are now up to Psalm 2 in our staff devotions program. I have been particularly challenged by the idea that we tend to find it easier to pray for our personal needs, rather than political situations that seem beyond our control and influence. Yet Psalm 2 reminds us that our God is a big God, he can “command [nations] to dance for you, or throw them out with tomorrow’s trash.” As you chat at home with your children about what is happening in the news or around the world, do you present an attitude of resignation or one which points to God’s sovereignty over all creation?

**Board Meetings**

Once a month, the Board and members of the executive meet for our regular meeting. The Board is made up of a group of parents who have been elected to represent the parent body in governing the school. In order to be a Board member, you need to be an Association member. A formal agenda is worked through as we discuss and report on various aspects of the school’s operation. After each of these meetings, a Board member provides a small snapshot of proceedings in the Newsletter so that as parents you can be fully informed. The Board volunteer their time and skills and so we thank and honour them for their service. If you would like to find out more about being an Association member of the school, please contact Nicole, one of our Community Relations officers.

**Celeste, Savannah & Emily**

Last week all the Year 8 girls went to The Lodge at Belgrave Heights to spend some quality time empowering and challenging each other as women of God. We discovered more about ourselves and developing healthy and respectful relationships with the people around us. As much as we had serious sessions, we also had a lot of free time to sit back, relax and just have fun! On this camp we were able to feel comfortable in our own skin and not feel the pressure of common day standards. There was a lot of giggling and the old nix-knocking prank. The teachers even took some time to provide us with a gift that might save our life one day. Over all camp was an unforgettable time!

**Jeneba, Alex & Astrid**
MECS Notes

MECS Kitchen Help Needed for 2014
The MECS kitchen provides a helpful service to the parents of students from Prep-Year 9, Wednesdays and Fridays, providing a wide variety of healthy food and drinks. The Kitchen is accredited annually by the Shire of Yarra Ranges and has maintained an excellent rating for the past 5 years.

To be able to provide this service, we rely on volunteers to help us out. Those who volunteered would be needed for a minimum of four hours per day, one day a term.

Would you consider volunteering? It’s a great way to meet other parents and help out the school.

Choose your day, come with a friend - your children will love to see you involved. Talk to Sheryl in the kitchen on the phone or drop in, Wed or Friday or email the office.

Car Parking
The lower court in the Primary school becomes a play area at recess and the gates are shut. Please ensure your car is not parked in this area by 10.30am as the gates are shut at 10.45am ready for recess play.

We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our children safe by not having parked cars in the play areas or cars being moved during recess time. 

Diane
Primary School Coordinator

Student ICT Agreements
Parents are reminded that the deadline for accepting the online Student ICT Agreements (AUP) has passed and yet there are still many families who have not completed this important process. Details were emailed to all families on 3 March using the email address/es you registered for electronic correspondence.

If you think you have not received the email, please call Nicole in the office or email. 

Online forms do not need to be printed, just ‘accepted’ online. If necessary copies of the documents can also be downloaded from the school website from the ‘Downloads Centre, Notices Home section’ or collected from the Office.

If you have overlooked this important matter, the deadline has been extended to next Monday, 17 March but students will lose access after this date if the agreements are not accepted. Please contact me if you have any further questions or problems accessing the new online agreement.

Mic
ICT Coordinator

Friends of MECS

Friends of MECS is headed up by the Community Relations team, Nicole and Amanda, and its aim is to provide opportunities for parents to be involved in various ways in school life. Some examples are:

• providing meals to be given to families who are going through a difficult time
• helping out on stationery days
• helping out with the Mother’s Day and Father’s Day stalls
• being on the prayer chain
• being part of the catering team and helping coordinate fundraising events.

This is just the beginning! We would love to hear any new ideas and suggestions you may have for ways of getting people involved, building community and fundraising.

Please call Nicole in the office or email.

Prayer Chain

11 years ago, when I first came to the school I was delighted to hear kids, from Prep to VCE, call out across the school yard “I’ll be praying for you”. What a privilege and honour it is to pray for someone. So I was pretty excited to be part of a simple email prayer chain and have the opportunity to pray for global matters of the school as well as other needs requested by staff, students or parents. As a new school year begins, and as I take over coordinating the weekly emails that make up how the prayers are circulated, I’d like to invite others to join us in prayer. I’m not so much asking for your time, as I know we’re all very busy, but more your consciousness of bringing the needs of our school community to God in your prayer. If you would like to join us, or have something you would like us to pray for, please send us an email.

Kerrie
Prayer Chain Coordinator

Mooroolbark Community Festival

How would you like to meet some of the Mooroolbark community at their Festival on Saturday March 22, 10am to 4pm?

We would love to have some volunteer students and parents come along and man our MECS stall.

Year 8 Man Camp

Last week, the Year 8 boys travelled to Gilwell Park for Man Camp. Once we had unpacked the bus, the teachers instructed us to put our bags under the shelter, and after much patience we finally got down to business and did the first activity… the Coke sculling competition. Will, Luke, Luke and James lined up in an orderly fashion that we had to spend four nights in. We did not have the luxury or privilege of comfy beds, but being the men we are, we could simply put up with it.

On Wednesday, our fathers or a significant male role model came along to thoroughly enjoy a well thought out day with their sons. We completed a series of challenges across the day, including building a hut out of the natural resources provided by the wonderful bush, and raft building. Once our rafts were completed, we had to successfully transport eight of our teammates across a dam. This challenge was frankly quite hard, but both teams somehow managed to survive the freezing cold water.

Man Camp was a fun and challenging experience for the Year 8 boys at MECS. It has made us individually stronger and brought the whole group of up and coming men together as one big loving, caring family.

Jake & Jesse
Primary Leaders at work

Our thanks go to the Primary Leaders who helped so much with Grandparents and Special Friends day:

MELT Team

Abbey, Harry, Alexander, Zari, Jodie, Ashlin & Kasey

Task Force (set up and pack up)

Matt P, Ella, Caleb C, Jacob R, Zak W, & Marcos.

Welcome team

Lili, Josh H, Emily, Olivia, Tahlia V, Emmerson, Oscar, Tom, Tyler, Tahlia C & Maya.

Nicole
Community Relations Officer

Christian Education Parent Seminar

Thursday March 20, 7pm

We would like to invite all new families to the Christian Education Parent Seminar happening next Thursday night. There are two seminars for you to attend, Seminar A and Seminar B. Our first for the year is Seminar A. These nights are designed to assist parents in gaining a better understanding of Christian education. Looking forward to having you there!

Laura
School Services Officer
If you asked any of the kids that went on Year 7 camp this year, they would probably tell you that while they were there they jumped off a giant green tower, got lost in the bush, learnt a new way to kill somebody and were their own personal chef for the time on camp. But that would probably confuse you so let's explain a little further.

Archery
As I pulled back on the string I could feel all of my muscles go into spasm, with pain shooting up and down my right arm. When I let go and shot the arrow at the target, I felt relief over my body. As I looked up I saw that I had shot in the white part.

Abseiling
A rush of adrenaline came over me as I stepped backwards off the tower, nine metres off the ground, with only ropes securing me. Fear didn’t exist, and excitement pulsed through me as I propelled myself closer to the ground. The cheer of the crowd loomed through the air as I loosened myself from the ropes securing me, my feet back on the ground I know and love.

Jemimah & Mikayla

For our Year 7 camp we went to Clifford Park in Wonga Park for 3 days.
We had a talent show with Jenna and Alexia as the host. We had 5 acts. First was Tara and Meggie singing ‘Royals’, second was Luke and Joel doing a magic act, third was Dakota singing ‘On top of the world’, fourth was Cooper and friends doing an act and last was Declan doing a flash mob.

We had so much fun cooking our breakfast and dinner with our group. We had hamburgers for dinner and bacon, eggs and hash browns.

Alexia & Dakota

Favourite activities!
- Cooking delicious food like hamburgers, bacon and eggs, and even a fruit salad!
- Doing a challenge course that involved lots of encouragement and mud!
- A talent show, with magnificent singing, dancing and acting

Jenna & Bec

Year 7 Challenge Camp
Grandparents and Special Friends Day

Last Thursday morning over 250 Grandparents and Special Friends got up early and travelled from far and wide to come and join us for this wonderful morning. We talked to one Grandparent who had travelled from Toowoomba!

The classrooms were busy places where our special guests, together with the students, got to create and make things, see their work around the room and explore the area where the students spend their playtimes.

After some lovely time together, we all gathered at the amphitheatre and Di, Primary Coordinator, extended a warm welcome to our guests. The Primary choir, under the guidance of the lovely Janine, performed for our special visitors. Narelle was introduced as the new principal and was presented with a vest of our tribal colours, made by the grandma of Paige, Haydn and Ella. Some of our student leaders read from the Psalms and then led us in prayer. The Grandparents and Special Friends then moved to the PUMP room for a lovely morning tea provided by Karen and Jay Van. A huge thank you to all of these amazing Grandparents and Special Friends who came to MECS for the morning - you helped make the day wonderful and we hope to see you again next year!

Nicole and Amanda
Community Relations Officers

On grandparents and special friends day me and my grandparents did drawing.

Kip

Yesterday my Pop and I drew pictures together!

Kai

Grandparents and special friends day - I love that day. I drew a picture and played outside.

Caleb

On grandparents day we went to do a bug hunt. We found snails and a caterpillar and then she left.

Gabriel

Nicole and Amanda
Community Relations Officers
MECS does not endorse the products or services of any private advertiser. No responsibility is accepted by Mount Evelyn Christian School for the accuracy of information contained in advertisements or claims made by them.

Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival
Friday 21 March, Talent Quest - 7.30pm
Saturday 22 March, Street Parade & Festival 9.30am-4pm.
Red Earth Park & Mooroolbark Community Centre
For details see www.celebratemooroolbark.com

Family Fun Day
Chirnside Park Country Club family fun day will include a jumping castle, face painting, market, auction, sausage sizzle, live entertainment and more.
Friday 18 April 10am-4pm.
Free entry. Raising money for Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal.
Contact us regarding enquiries about holding a stall on the day.

Op Shop Opening
New Christian Outreach Ministries Op Shop opening Sat 15 March 10 am, 208 Dorset Road, Boronia.
There is plenty of parking around the back and also an entry at the back. It will be called All Sorts Opportunity Shop.

Find - At Working Bee
Left behind at the 22 Feb Working Bee:
1 Large Rusty jacket Grey/Black with fine white stripe.
If yours please contact Paula in the office.

Kinder Photo Days
This year, we have a great photography company called Max Amos Photography who will be taking the photos. If you have a child in kinder, please make a note of the relevant kinder photo day in your diary:
Possums: Monday 24 March 9am-12pm
Bluebirds: Tuesday 25 March 9am-12pm
Koalas: Wednesday 26 March 9am-12pm
Rosellas: Thursday 27 March 9am-12pm
Wendy
Early Years Coordinator

Next Working Bee
Saturday 22 March
8.00am-1pm
Morning Tea Provided

School Photo Day Monday 17 March.
Payment due tomorrow (Friday).
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Early Years Coordinator

NOTICES
MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES

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Wendy
Early Years Coordinator

Notices sent home this week and on Website

- MP Maths Program (last week)
- Parent Teacher Interview Login Details
- Student ICT Agreements - Prep & JP
- Student ICT Agreements - Secondary
- Christian Ed New Parent Seminar Notice
- Careers Newsletter 3, March 11
- Student ICT Agreements - MP & SP
- Martyrs Bus Application Form & Timetable