Understanding the past

Nia, Isobella, Ruby & Charlotte enjoyed some hands on learning during JPs ‘Old Fashioned Day’
One of my all-time favourite films is ‘Life is Beautiful’. Set in fascist Italy at the outbreak of the Second World War, the film is about a Jewish-Italian family which experiences the horrors of the Holocaust.

The main character is a waiter with an irrepressible optimism and love for life. He embraces every activity and experience with a passion that leaves one breathless – from courting his future wife, to speaking at a school assembly, to serving customers, to riding his bike. To protect his young son from the obscenity of the ‘death camp’ to which they are taken as Jews he tells his son that they are playing a game, with an absolutely fantastic prize at the end for winners. Every aspect of the camp is interpreted as an element of the game. The harsh German commands of the Nazi guards are translated into Italian as the rules of the game. The food deprivation is to test the stamina of the players. Secrecy and discretion is needed because other players may gain an advantage.

And so the young boy interprets all obscenities of the concentration camp in terms of the game, played with determination in spite of all the discomforts, pain and trauma. For the boy, the game becomes the reality of his existence, and so the father helps the son to survive the awful trauma of the camp. When the going gets really tough and the boy wants to go home, the father draws him back in with the goal and vision of the prize. In sustaining the reality of the game the father actually sacrifices his own life so that his son survives.

Although the film’s director probably had nothing like it in mind, ‘Life is Beautiful’ is an appropriate analogy of the Christian life. We can live with optimism, enthusiasm and passion because life IS beautiful, in spite of its deep ugliness in many places and on many occasions. We can live with hope because of the ‘prize’ that is the coming Kingdom of God.

The apostle Paul had his fair share of hardships and setbacks. Not many of us can ‘boast’ of being shipwrecked, flogged, beaten, imprisoned, ridiculed, slandered and ignored! Paul would have had some amazing stories of survival to tell his grandchildren if he’d made it that far. Some of our stresses and discomforts pale into insignificance compared to his. You wonder at his staying power, his tenacity, his sheer ability to weather every physical assault and emotional blow. Mind you there are lots of indications in his letters that he often despaired, was torn by doubts, was frustrated by some of the people he had to deal with, and sometimes felt like throwing in the towel altogether.

However, in Philippians 3 he writes, “I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward – to Jesus. I’m off and running and I’m not turning back. So let’s keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us… there’s far more to life for us. We’re citizens of high heaven! We’re awaiting the arrival of the Saviour, the Master; Jesus Christ … He’ll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and round him.”

One of the secrets of Paul’s endurance was his overwhelming sense of vision about the Kingdom to come. He had an unshakeable sense of who controlled the future and a confidence in his own journey towards the ‘prize’. For Paul there was a new world coming – he already lived, worked, played and worshipped as a ‘citizen of heaven’. And this prize, the consummated presence of God’s Kingdom, was everything to Paul.

As God’s people living in this part of the biblical story, hopefully we have the necessary imagination and courage to also live as ‘citizens of heaven’. We already see signs of it everywhere – in the people we meet, in the congregations we worship in, in the generosity and support of family and friends, in the mercy and grace we experience, in the life of this school. But may we continue to work for the ultimate prize – when God’s Kingdom comes in all its fullness and completeness – and in the meantime, may we be the signposts of it coming!

Narelle
MECS Principal

Primary Teacher Bad Hat Day!
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Planning for 2015
Would you believe we have begun our planning and preparations for next year? The staff have been surveyed about their intentions and desires, enrolment interviews are happening regularly as we confirm our year level lists and a new system for constructing our section timetables has been implemented. Next term we really get busy as we begin to finalise budgets and allotments for staff! If your family has any plans that might impact our planning for 2015, we would love to hear from you as soon as possible!

Meeting the Year 12s for lunch
One of the regular events that I have enjoyed this term is meeting with our Year 12 students for lunch. Every Monday and Tuesday, 2 or 3 of them come to my office and we share lunch together. This has been a great opportunity to meet this impressive group of young people and hear something of their dreams and aspirations for the future, as well as their educational journey through MECS. They also give me a student insight into what they love about this school, but also what they think needs a bit of work! I look forward to continuing this process over the next few weeks until I have met them all. Please keep these students in your prayers as they complete the final months of their secondary school.

Connect Morning Teas
Our Connect morning-teas are just one of the ways we seek to grow community here at MECS. Amanda and Nicole do a great job in making sure each year level, cluster or section have the opportunity to meet with other parents and staff in order to grow friendship and partnership throughout our community. We know these morning-teas don't suit everyone, particularly those who have work commitments, but it's great to see those who can make it!

Kinder Interviews
On 23 and 24 June, our Kinder parents will have the opportunity to meet with the Kinder staff to discuss the progress of their little ones. We are so thankful and blessed with the way our Kindergarten provides the opportunity for our very young children to begin their educational journey in an environment that honours God and seeks to partner with parents right from the outset. We look forward to these interviews – the first of many for the parents of our youngest students!

Developing Leaders Conference
Next week I will be accompanying four of our teachers to the Developing Leaders Conference in Hobart. This Conference, facilitated by Christian Education National, brings together teachers from all around Australia with the purpose of thinking about leadership in the future. Congratulations to Karissa, Emma, Nicky and Ben on being selected to attend the Conference this year.

CAFÉ Strategy: Blend Sounds, Stretch and Reread
It often requires a lot of patience to listen to beginning readers as they learn to decode and sound out words. Beginning readers usually learn their sounds in isolation and as a result sound choppy when they try to put these sounds together to make words. Taking the individual letter sounds and blending them together can be a first step to becoming a reader for many children. As with any other task, to improve in reading a person must have increased exposure and practice, practice, practice. Your child is working on the accuracy strategy of blending sounds. The following ideas provide you with suggestions on how you can assist your child in becoming a better reader.

How can you help your child with this strategy at home?

1. When reading and blending sounds together, encourage your child to listen for a familiar word.

2. Give your child a rubber band and have them take it between two hands. Write down a simple word for your child to read (3 letter words such as bat, dog, and cap). Have your child pull the band apart a bit with each sound in the word. This will have your child stretching out both the band and the word. When finished with all of the sounds, say the word together while bringing hands together.

3. When reading, tell your child, “Say each letter as you stretch them out, then put them together and say it fast.” Demonstrate what this sounds like for your child.

4. If your child is having difficulty blending sounds and still sounds choppy, encourage your child to sing as they sound out the word. It is almost impossible to make a word sound choppy when you are singing. 😊

Parent Pipeline

Thank you for your continued support at home!

- Ideas and strategies are taken from: The CAFE Book, written by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser
- Written by: Allison Behne © www.thedailycafe.com

MECS Notes

Forum for Understanding and treating depression & anxiety in young people
This forum for parents will discuss:
• signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression,
• methods of treatment,
• side effects of medications, and
• monitoring young people’s mental health after recovery
• referral pathways for young people and families requiring additional services.

To register your attendance, please contact the EACH Youth and Family team.

This forum is for parents of teenagers with anxiety and depression
It will be held at the EACH (Building A) 46 Warrandyte Rd, Ringwood, Tuesday 24 June 2014, 7pm-8.30pm.
Cost free.
Friends of MECS

Meals needed

We try to keep a supply of frozen meals in the office freezer to offer families who need support and that freezer is nearly empty! If you are able to make a meal, please place it in a disposable container and list the quantity and ingredients. We would really appreciate your contribution. You can drop meals in at the Main Office anytime. Thank you.

Nicole and Amanda
Community Relations Officers

Prayer Chain

Are you a praying parent who would like to support our school community in this vital way? Email and you will be added to our growing list of praying parents and receive regular e-mails with prayer needs for our community.

JP Old Fashioned Day

Last Monday the JPs had a dress up day at school. We are learning how school was in the past.

First we waited in line for the teacher. When the teacher came we had to go in silently.

Next she got us to start literacy. In literacy we did handwriting about listening to the teacher. During literacy Mrs E came to visit and pretended to smack a few people with her ruler.

After recess we did some maths. Later we did Core Studies. Eventually it was the end of the day. I liked it.

Josiah

JPs had an old fashioned dress up day at school. We are learning about the past.

First we waited for the teacher. She made us come in silently.

Next she got us straight into literacy and we had to write out all our homework in pencil.

Finally we did some more work and went home.

It was very very fun.

Patrick

In JP we are learning about Then and Now.

First we did literacy. It was mostly writing.

Next Mrs E came in and did some (pretend) smacking. It was funny.

Finally we did Core Studies.

Jenson

Last Monday the JPs and teachers had a dress up day. We had it at school. We wanted to see how school was back in the past.

First we came inside silently. When we came inside we sat down.

Then we did some handwriting. While we were writing, Mrs E came in and did some pattywhacking!

After that we had recess. I played with Morgan.

After recess, we went back into our classroom silently. Next we did maths. In maths we used whiteboards, whiteboard markers and whiteboard rubbers.

Finally we had lunch and Core Studies.

I loved the day. I especially loved having the tables and chairs in rows.

Christy
JPs had a Then and Now day. We are learning about the past and spent most of the day in the classroom.

First we had literacy. We did lots of writing. We did handwriting. Then we had to write our homework. It was so hard.

Next Mrs E came in. She checked Pat’s fingers because they are sometimes dirty. Then Pat got a (pretend) whack.

After all of that smacky whack we had maths. We did it on whiteboards. We had no worksheets or computers.

Finally we had Core Studies. I felt like it was the past.
Learning about how God gives us people to help us leads Preps to investigate the various roles people play in the community.

Mrs Penny T, a former play room teacher from the Royal Children’s hospital, engaged the children in thinking about the feelings, environment and people they may meet if they go to hospital.

The children appreciated how wonderfully created we are by God as the layers of the dolls revealed the organs and skeletal systems. They learned the importance of drinking lots of water to keep their kidneys and brains working properly.

She went on to teach some very important life skills. They learned about never ever touching found needles. And how to ring 000 for an ambulance.

The morning was full of rich learning experiences including singing and dancing to songs about the body, and an imaginary trip to MECS hospital. The junior doctors and nurses worked busily to fix the big rag doll patients. The complicated surgeries required lots of bandages and bandaids!

Jan
Prep Coordinator/Teacher
LOST

Josh Sharp has lost his Year 6 hoodie. It has JS written on the tag. Can all Year 6s please check that they have the correct hoodie? If anyone else finds a Year 6 hoodie lying around could they please give it to Mrs Mel D?

MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES

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.

Rental home wanted!
MECS/MERC/Oasis family requires a large family home, 5-6 bedrooms, from August. If you can help please contact Lee 0418 562 641.

Pest Warriors
Baines Pest Control specialise in dealing with mice, rats, spiders, cockroaches in residential and commercial properties. A discount of 20% to all the Christian community. Please quote 'Christian community' to receive your discount.
Contact Richard.

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Family Indoor Picnic
Ferntree Gully Community Arts Centre and Library are holding a free event on Friday 13 June, 6.30-8pm, 1010 Burwood Highway, Ferntree Gully. BYO picnic and rug. Entertainment includes magician Luigi Zucchini and musicians Taking Time, storytime and activities.

Cycle A Production
Looking for a great night out? Want to learn something about Old English Literature whilst having a good laugh? Love to see young people coming together to explore their unique skills and talents?

Well, the Cycle A Production is for you!
With 3 dazzling performances next week on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, your whole family can be entertained! There is even supper included!

Ticket order forms are available from the Main office.
When is it on?
Thursday June 19, Friday June 20 and Saturday June 21 at 7.30pm.
Family: $35 (strictly 2 adults and 2 children/concession or 1 adult 3 children/concession, a total of 4 people on 1 family.
Adult: $15
Child/concession: $10

The costumes are here!