Poppies for ANZAC Day

Ella, Tom & Caleb installing poppies in the Principal’s window. More on Page 6.
A Culture of Empathy

In a recent Middle School assembly, we introduced our focus for the term: developing a culture of empathy.

What is culture?
One of the key things that has dominated my thinking and planning as Middle School Coordinator this year is culture. There are many complex definitions of culture in organisation and management books, but at a practical level, it can best be thought of as “the way we do things around here.” This definition is easy to grasp, and to my mind, comprises two key elements.

Firstly, it forces one to examine the present reality of how an organisation actually functions—at times, this can be quite confronting! In our context, asking “How do we do things in Middle School?” requires us to shine a light on all areas of operation, going far beyond rules and classes and programs.

The second element of culture is aspirational; it defines an organisation’s hopes and dreams, and requires one to ask, “How do we want to do things around here?” In our context, it necessitates that students and teachers alike ask, “What sort of Middle School do we want to be?”

Who is responsible for culture?
In our assemblies, classrooms and one-on-one conversations this year, we have consistently and intentionally empowered students to share in the responsibility of building a positive culture in the Middle School. Rules don’t make culture. Teachers don’t make culture. It is something for which we all are responsible, and something to which we all contribute.

A culture of empathy
Empathy is a concept that is often discussed, but I would argue, often misunderstood. Many reduce the idea to simply “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes,” but I do not feel that this captures the full meaning. In introducing the concept of empathy to students, we directed their attention to a statement made by Jesus, now often referred to as ‘the Golden Rule’:

Matthew 7:12 [NIV]
“…do to others what you would have them do to you…”

In other words, treat other people the way that you want to be treated.

This is a really good start, but alone it is not enough. Each of us is different; we are motivated by different things, frustrated by different things and upset by different things. There will be some jokes, some comments and some actions that would not bother you personally, but that doesn’t mean that they will affect someone else the same way.

Merely “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes” and contemplating how you would feel in the same situation is a good habit to get into, but it is not enough. In fact, Jesus ups his challenge in Mark 12:30-31. When asked which commandment is the most important, Jesus replies:

Mark 12:30-31 [NIV]
30 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” 31 The second is this: love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

Love your neighbour as yourself.
Loving someone requires that we do more than just think about how we would like to be treated or what we would like other people to do for us. Loving someone requires knowing them, understanding them, appreciating their idiosyncrasies and valuing what they have to offer—in short, loving someone requires that we empathise with them.

So, what sort of Middle School do we want to be?
These are the challenges that we have put forth to Middle School students this term:

• What do we want to be the defining characteristics of Middle School culture?
• What practical things can each of us do to achieve this culture?

Personally, my prayer is for the Middle School to be characterised by empathy; a place where people—students and staff alike—know that they are loved, respected and understood. A place that recognises and values the diversity of skills and abilities that God blesses us with and encourages students to pursue them for God’s glory.

We may not be there yet, but it is definitely worth aiming for.

Bradley
Middle School Coordinator
SKETCHER’S

Parent Seminars

Last week we had over 30 parents join us for a Parent Seminar. These seminars are designed to introduce our new families to Christian education in more detail. In this first session we looked at ‘What makes MECS tick?’ and identified together some of the key aspects of partnership, governance and the way we bring a Christian perspective to all our learning. These evenings are vital to ensure that the continuing vision of Christian education is embraced and well understood by all members of our community. We look forward to the second series of parent seminars later in the year where we ‘unpack’ some of the jargon around Christian education.

VIP Morning-teas

Another ‘full-house’ last week was my office on Friday morning! Every Friday, the Primary VIPs for the week are invited to have morning-tea with me. It is a great opportunity for me to get to know the students and hear some of the things they love about their school and also some of the things they think need improving! Sometimes these suggestions are way out there, but often they are on to a good thing. The water bubblers down near the Primary oval came about because of a suggestion from a Primary student last year. I love seeing the energy and enthusiasm of primary students as they come into my office and we share muffins together!

FOCUS

On... Performing Arts

Darkness falls in the theatre and a hush goes over the expectant audience. A moment later the show begins, the stage lights revealing a world that is both real and unreal. The performers give; the audience receives and gives back in return. We are mesmerized and moved as a story unfolds in front of us. This is the Performing Arts. This is the heart of God.

No, I’m not just being dramatic (excuse the pun) for the sake of it! This is exciting stuff! God is a creator and we are made in his image, so when we participate in the arts, whether as creators or consumers, we potentially tap into something of God’s truth. The Performing Arts (drama, music and dance), in particular, have the ability to connect with people in a powerful way. God has made us like this! We are meant to share stories, to be enthralled by beautiful music, to move, leap and dance. We are made to create and to respond to creation!

Colin Harbinson, an internationally renowned Christian writer, director and producer, who spoke at a staff meeting last year, says in the article ‘Restoring the Arts’, ‘The universal language of the arts illustrates that all human beings are a reflection of the one who ‘formed’ them (Gen 1: 26, 27). For the same reason, every people group demonstrates universal, yet unique cultural expressions of music, dance, drama, storytelling, art, crafts and architecture.’ (www.colinharbinson.com/teaching/restoringarts.html)

At MECS all students undertake Drama and Music in Middle School, and this year around fifty Year 7 to 10 students have taken up Performing Arts, which is an option within the weekly sport programs. These students participate in small, collaborative theatre productions which usually involve music and dance as well as drama. The subject matter varies with each project but the aim is that students learn to tell meaningful stories in ways that will engage an audience. They learn through the process of creating something from nothing, which is what God has done and all artists do. The students work with others, share their ‘creation’ with an audience and revel in the joy of ‘play’.

And whether they realize it or not, in doing so, they reflect the creativity and beauty of their Heavenly Dad. That’s pretty exciting!

Marlene

VCE Drama & English/MS Drama Teacher

Anzac Poppies

If you have an opportunity, you might like to pop up to the entrance of my office to see the poppies that the Primary children have made to commemorate Anzac Day! Each one is unique and they look fabulous.

Community Relations

This week we farewell Amanda, one of our Community Relations Officers. Amanda has served this community faithfully for over 11 years making sure that all members of our community feel loved and supported through times of joy and difficulty. One of the distinctive aspects of this school is the way community and partnership is promoted and supported. Amanda has overseen the big events and small gestures that make this possible. We are grateful for her passion, energy and hard work and wish her well as she pursues new opportunities.

To support Nicole, Ann has joined our Community Relations team. Ann will be with us for six months to continue the vital work that Amanda and Nicole have established over many years. Please make her feel welcome as she begins the task of getting to know families in our community.

On... Performing Arts

Working Bee

This Saturday 2 May, 8am-1pm

Morning Tea Provided
Entertainment Book

The Entertainment Books have arrived! There is a sample book in the main office for you to look through. Some of the things you could save money on include:

- Woolworths Wish Cards – save 5% on your groceries/petrol all year
- Big W gift cards – save 10% all year
- Reading Cinema tickets - $11.00 all year
- Dinner vouchers for many local and not so local restaurants
- Coffee vouchers and much more.

To order please fill in the flyer (available in the office) or go online to: www.entbook.com.au/193f695.

Evelyn

Think Global and Local
Mother’s Day Stall, Fri 8 May

This is the theme again for this year’s Mother’s Day stall. Friends of MECS have an exciting range of ‘fair trade’ and locally produced gifts for the Mother’s and Father’s day stalls. Sales will be supporting communities in Uganda, Thailand, Cambodia and Africa.

Let your children know that the range of gifts will be different to past stalls and will be used to support people who do not have the same opportunities as we do in Australia.

Primary students will be taken by their class teacher to purchase their gifts. Please have your child’s money in a named envelope. Middle School students will have opportunity to buy at lunchtime in the PUMP room.

Nicol

Community Relations Officer

Open Day – Saturday 9 May
10am-1pm

If you have family or friends who are interested in Christian education, you are most welcome to take them on a personal tour on Open Day or encourage them to come along. We have quite a few activities happening around the school on the day.

If you are available we need help with:

- Face painting
- Making balloon animals
- Serving Devonshire Tea
- Supervising jumping castles or cup cake decorating
- Assisting with classroom activities
- Assisting with the Sausage Sizzle
- Setting up between 8am-10am
- Packing up between 12.30-1.30pm

If you are available to help us (even for an hour), we would really appreciate it. Please phone Nicole on 9738 6023, or email nnyhouse@mecs.vic.edu.au.

If you have a busy day and are not sure if you can squeeze it in, please just drop in to school when and if you can. Thank you for your support.

Nicol

Canteen News

Online Ordering

Our alternative ordering system for the canteen is now up and running.

This online ordering system is the preferred method for ordering at MECS.

Flexischools is a simple four-step process:

- **Register:** Log on to flexischools.com.au and register, then add your child’s details
- **Top-Up:** Top up your account via Visa, Mastercard, PayPal or Direct Debit
- **Order and Pay:** Select the ‘Canteen’ option and place your order
- **Review or Edit:** Review and/or edit the order, then submit

There is no charge to set up your Flexischools account, however they do charge a 25c order processing fee and between 29c-35c to top up your account (direct debit top up is free). Access is available via your desktop or mobile device, so you can log in from anywhere before the 8am cut-off time on Canteen day to place your order. Easy!

We would encourage you to give Flexischools a try, however order bags will still be available from the office for those families who wish to use them.

Seryl

Canteen Manager

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Seryl

Canteen Manager
Year 5 Camp Jungai

My favourite thing about camp was...
Sitting around the camp fire, starting songs and watching other people join in.
Marina, SPD

The cultural session where we learnt Aboriginal beliefs about Bunjil, the wedge tail eagle. We also did dances about other animals of Australia.
Kiara, SPK

When our team won ‘The cup of chocolatey goodness’.
Caleb, SPC

Eating the wonderful food. It smelt, looked and tasted fantastic! It was delicious!
Jasmine, SPC

The fun games with Mr Brown. We played balloon wars, stack the buckets and the chocolate river with marshmallows.

Something else that I really enjoyed was...
The bush walk. It was really cool seeing plants and the river.
Toben, SPC

Drinking the fresh stream water. It was crystal clear and was so refreshing. It tasted way better than our normal water.
Maddi, SPK

The food. It was the best! It was amazing and yummy.
Indigo, SPD

The initiatives with Mr Brown. We got to do lots of different activities.
Josh, SPK

My biggest challenge on camp was...
Orienteering. It was tricky but lots of fun.
Isaiah, SPK

Canoeing. We couldn’t figure out how to turn the canoe.
Sam, SPK

My fondest memory of camp was...
When we all worked as a team in the different activities.
J’den, SPC

Making new friends and hanging out with my friends.
Emma, SPD
On Monday the Primary School GT remembered ANZAC Day. We had a special visitor, Mrs Win M (Di’s Mum). Win’s dad was an Anzac who went to Gallipoli. The children heard how her Dad, Frank Wills went to both Gallipoli & France. They saw some of his medals, photographs, postcards and his diary. The Middle Primary students read poems they had written during the previous week and they also explained the meaning of some of the Anzac symbols. The GT concluded with Carolyn playing the last post and a minute’s silence was followed by prayers for peace. All students made a poppy after the GT. These are displayed in the Principal’s windows.

Di
Assistant Principal - Primary

Middle Primary ANZAC Poems

Great Grandpa
Great Grandpa sailed across the sea.
He went to fight at Gallipoli.
They landed on the beach and hid inside a trench.
Fought against the enemies with great ANZAC strength!
Great Grandpa was shot through, a bullet in his middle.
It went in one side and came out the other.
He lived to tell the riddle!

Abigail

Red Roses
Red Roses and big bruises
poor families and sore soldiers.
Gold medals and new generations
happy families and broken hearts.

Kyan

Australia and New Zealand
I arrive in the misty night.
My friends comfort me and say it will be alright.
I can’t even see my boots, it is dark and damp.
The waves crash and splatter my face.
I am waiting for the order to start to fight.
I wish it would be over and done in a minute.
I hear the cry to start.
I shoot my gun.

Lily

They died for freedom
Big wards
Broken hearts
Sore bodies
Dark moments
Tragic dreams
Loud noises
They died for freedom
We love them
Lest we forget.

Lanii

I Remember
I remember the day when my Dad went to war.
I said goodbye and my heart was sore.
I was worried to start with, but I started to pray.
It soon got better and the worry went away.
There were injured soldiers, on the ground they lay.
There were tired bodies, with their lives they paid.
The letters he wrote were special to me.
When I closed my eyes, his face I could see.
One day I got a note and this is what it said: He’s brave and he fought hard, but I am sorry he is dead.
To remember him, I planted a tree.
To honour the day when he died at Gallipoli.

Zoe
Lifting Lunch Club

The Lifting Lunch Club is back for 2015!

In our 10th year, students and staff join together semi-weekly during Term 2 to build strength, endurance and camaraderie. The club performs a combination of lifting light weights (350 times/repetitions) and sprinting. The ‘Cyclone’ routine is deliberately gruelling. ‘Cyclones’ are named after Iowa State University Cyclones whose wrestling team created the routine.

Four aspects of the Lifting Lunch Club are countercultural:

1. Teachers run the Lifting Lunch Club voluntarily at no expense to the school.
2. Students participate voluntarily – they choose to work extremely hard for 30 minutes without being asked or being rewarded. If only more teenagers did their chores so enthusiastically.
3. Lifting Lunch Club is offered 22 times in Term 2 and an additional 14 times for Year 9/10 Sport students. An unusual number of times for training in Australian schools.
4. It is a really gruelling 30 minute workout – I am so sore afterwards I walk like an old man for days.

While sporting activities of this intensity are not the cultural ‘norm’ in schools, I feel that it is an appropriate response to news 1/4 of Australian teenagers are now overweight or obese. As poor health limits what we can do for His kingdom, it is exciting to strengthen the wonderful bodies God created. Lifting Lunch Club is one way we teachers can ‘go the extra mile’ to show our students God’s love.

Adam
SS Teacher

Primary GT - Reflecting on ANZAC Day

ANZAC

I look at the poppy pinned on my shirt and smell the rosemary in my hand. I can still taste the Anzac biscuit I ate. All this reminds me of the people who went on a ship to reach the other side of the world on a rocky beach. Frightened but brave, Australian and New Zealand soldiers fought, seeing friends dying around them. Few came home, and the ones that did would be devastated. If they did not fight, we would not have a free country today. So let’s remember this now and as long as we live. Lest we forget.

Calvin

The ANZACS

Pain
Brave hearts broken
Loud noises
Sad moments
Yet they fought for freedom.

Trinity

ANZAC

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Trinity
**Calendar**

**2015 Term 2 Week 3: 27 April - 3 May**

- **Wed 29 - Fri 1 May**
  - Year 6 Camp
- **Sat 2 May**
  - Working Bee including Morning Tea 8am-1pm
- **2015 Term 2 Week 4: 4 May - 10 May**
  - **Tues 5 May**
    - Year 11 Physics Observatory excursion (evening)
  - **Wed 6 May**
    - Primary Cross Country
    - Prep Parent Night 6.30pm
  - **Thur 7 May**
    - Year 8 Interschool Soccer
  - **Fri 8 May**
    - Mother’s Day Stall
  - **Sat 9 May**
    - Open Day 10am-1pm
- **2015 Term 2 Week 5: 11 May - 17 May**
  - **Tues 12 - Thur 14 May**
    - NAPLAN
  - **Tues 12 - Fri 15 May**
    - Year 8 Inspiring Girls Camp
    - Year 8 Man Camp
  - **Wed 13 May**
    - Prep Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
    - Koalas & Possums Photo Day
  - **Thur 14 May**
    - MP Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
    - Year 12 Mentor Supper 7.30pm
  - **Fri 15 May**
    - Year 11 Physics Excursion Scienceworks
- **2015 Term 2 Week 6: 18 May - 24 May**
  - **Tues 19 May**
    - Bluebirds Photo Day
    - JP Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
  - **Wed 20 May**
    - Year 9 Interschool Soccer
    - 4 yo Kinder Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
  - **Thur 21 May**
    - Rosellas Photo Day
  - **Fri 22 May**
    - Secondary Tribal Cross Country

**Lost Property**

A Casio classpad, including stylus has been misplaced/missing in the Senior School since Term 1. It is marked with KATIE.E (Kaitlyn Eyssens) on the calculator. Please return it to the office if found asap. Thanks, Sonia Eyssens.

**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.

**National Walk Safely to School Day**

**Friday 22 May**

Now in its 16th year, this community initiative encourages children to lead a healthier, more active lifestyle by simply including a walk at the beginning, at lunch-time and at end of each school day. The event also promotes reduced car-dependency, greater use of public transport, cleaner air, improved diets and road safety to primary school children throughout Australia.

Families, parents and carers can get involved on the day by simply walking to school from home with their children, or walking with them to the school bus. If parents or carers have to drive, park the car a short distance away from school and walk the rest of the way, but please remember, until they are 10, children must always hold the hand of an adult when they cross the road - any road!

Visit walk.com.au to find out more.

**ANZAC Ceremony**

A ceremony and the unveiling of a memorial will take place at the graveside of Lieutenant Commander Geoffrey Arthur Gordon Haggard DSC, the second in command of the HMAS AE2, to commemorate the centenary of the loss of this gallant ship and her crew at Gallipoli, 1915. HMAS AE2, known as the ‘Silent Anzac’, was the first submarine to penetrate the Dardanelles Strait in 1915, on the very morning ANZAC soldiers landed at Gallipoli. The AE2 became the first Royal Australian Navy warship to conduct a torpedo attack against an enemy warship. But five days later she fell to Turkish gunfire.

Sunday May 3, 2pm, Lilydale Lawn Cemetery, Cnr Victoria Rd and Nelson Rd, Lilydale. Contact Don Parsons 0418 588 360 or dpar@ozemail.com.au.

**For Sale**

- **Metallic Blue Nintendo DS Lite $50** - excellent condition, with charger, case, M3 DS Real card, memory card with preloaded games and Nintendogs.
- **Polar White Nintendo DS Lite $50** - good to excellent condition, with charger, case, M3 DS Real card, memory card with preloaded games and Mario Party. Or both for $90.

Contact Rosalie 0417 972 860 or rosalie@syskro.com.

**Weed Blitz**

Free Environmental Weed Tipping Day - Sat May 16, 9am–3pm. Skips will be available at Kallista Community House and Mount Evelyn Rec Reserve, York Rd, Mount Evelyn. **Weeds that will be accepted:** Agapanthus, Arum Lily, Asparagus Fern, Banana Passionfruit, Cotoneaster, English Holly, English Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle, Karamu, Mirror bush, Montbretia, Red Cestrum, Sweet Pittosporum, Wandering Trad, Wild Tobacco Tree.

For information on weed removal techniques call Yarra Ranges Council on 9294 6215 or visit www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au.

**Benwerren Opportunity**

Benwerren needs a couple to be staff workers involved in the ministry at Yarra Junction. They are looking for people who are ‘called’ to a practical ministry with women and children in need.

They need to be mature in Christian faith and relationships, physically active, compassionate, non-judgemental, willing to learn and be part of a team. Accommodation package available.

Volunteers are also needed on a regular basis (day or weekend) to support staff workers.

Contact: Dawn 5964 6287 or 5967 1021 or write to Attn Dawn, PO BOX 94, Yarra Junction 3797.

**Tuning in to Teens**

**Tuning in to Teens** is a six-week program to equip parents with the skills of emotional coaching, listening and responding to the emotional experience of their child. Material based on research by Melbourne University. The program will cover:

- Setting out to raise emotionally intelligent children
- Naming emotions
- Understanding your child’s emotional experience
- Self-care, problem solving and coaching fears and worries
- Emotion coaching your child’s anger
- Emotionally intelligent parenting now and in the future.

There are still a few places left and the course is now starting Tuesday 5 May at 7.15pm for 6 weeks, excluding Tuesday 12 May. Contact Coleen 0412 129 842 or email: engaginglifecoaching@gmail.com www.livinglife.net.au. In conjunction with Croydon Hills Baptist Church.

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**Newsletter deadline is 11am Tuesday on published week. Email articles (images attached as jpg) to the Newsletter Office**

**Meals**

- **Year 11 Physics**, Mount Burnett & Scienceworks excursion notices - (last week)
- **Year 7 & 8 Interschool Soccer (last week)**
- **JP Term 2 Newsletter**
- **Open Day letter**
- **Careers Newsletter No 5, April 27**