A Positive Day at Oasis

Jonathan enjoying the low ropes course at Oasis Christian Campsite. Story Page 7.
Reading Word and World Part 2

Last week Narelle highlighted the theme of ITEC15 – Reading Word & World, and focused on reading the Word. This week let’s take a look at reading the World.

One of the keynote speakers at ITEC15 was Dr Justine T (Centre for Public Christianity in Sydney). Through her presentation “Children of lesser gods” she uncovered three ‘lesser gods’, although I prefer to call them false gods along the lines of Psalm 4:2 where the Psalmist asks, “… How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?”

The first of these false gods is Freedom. A Jeep TV advert neatly reveals this god (see it here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHg9XSydh8F). This god promises that that we can do whatever we like free from constraint. It tells our children that if only they threw off the shackles and did whatever they liked they would find salvation. It doesn’t matter that the doing may be bad or evil (Justine referred to sexual perversions), all is made good when it is the result of free choice.

It is the god of freedom that causes its worshippers to conclude that I hate them if I happen to disagree with what they are doing because my disagreement is seen as a fundamental challenge to the god that gives them their identity. This god is a poor copy of a great blessing in the Kingdom of God – “it is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (Gal 5:1). This true freedom is about being free to choose that which is good and loving. The false god of freedom leads to enslavement – “They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity – for people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.” (2 Peter 2:19). Can I encourage you to start spotting the messages of unbridled freedom in society? Challenge them and discuss them with your kids.

False god number two is Utility (I call it Usefulness). A common question asked to new acquaintances is, “What do you do?” I would be stunned if the answer was “nothing”. Justine reminded us that our culture cares more about career skills than character skills. I find it ironic that footy players are recruited for their career skills (kicking, marking, tackling, etc.) and then somehow society is shocked when they do not behave as a “role model” (display character skills). The holy grail for this god is being useful or valuable. This is such a powerful god that dependence or non-productivity is humiliating and undesirable. A friend of mine, who is a widow, is not working. When people ask her what she does she feels compelled to mention her Op shop volunteering and the fact that she looks after her grandkids in order to not seem unproductive or burdensome to society.

This god denies salvation to the elderly and frail, it excludes people with severe disabilities, it considers children as future workers (a particular lie evident in education) rather than valuable as created in God’s image. This god draws us into a sense the sacred texts of this god.

The third false god is Therapy, the “Be Here Now Mentality”, or YOLO (you only live once). It’s the idea that the goal of life is self-realisation and self-fulfilment through wellbeing. “We will assess the success of our lives in accordance not with whether they were righteous, but whether they were interesting and fun.” (Lionel Schriver)

This god will supposedly set me free from the demands of tradition, community and authority so that I can find myself. It says that satisfaction and contentment can replace the faith logic of self-control and sacrifice. Oprah’s slogan “Are you living your best life?” sums up the ideology of this god well. There are other slogans that also point to this false god – “be true to yourself”, “follow your bliss”, “be authentic”. This god seduces us with the notion that if we pursue these ideas they will lead to a happier, more fulfilled life (e.g. the movie “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty”). Morality under this god is about heeding one’s own truth and living well. Perhaps so-called “bucket lists” are in a sense the sacred texts of this god.

This god is actually an inverse copy of the true gospel, for Jesus said, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.” (Mark 8:35 NIV).

If you have stayed with me and read this far, well done. The challenge of reading the World accurately is one that is hard work. It is one that we expect our staff to take seriously. It is because the counterfeits of the World look so similar to the Word that we strive to help our students to read the difference between Word and World.

Dr Gerry B
Administration Manager

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Administration Manager
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Year 9 & 10 Performing Arts Performance

Last Saturday afternoon I headed off to the Community Arts Centre in Emerald to see our Year 9 & 10 Performing Arts students perform in the Yarra Ranges One Act Festival. They performed a moving and thought-provoking play, ‘Only Children’, written and directed by drama teacher, Marlene. The students did a fabulously job and were recognised for their efforts by winning the ‘Best Production’ of the festival. Other awards included Erica (Best Female Actor), Beth (Most Promising Actor) and Brenton (Best Male Supporting Actor). Congratulations to the whole ensemble on such a wonderful performance. The students will be performing this 40 minute play on Thursday 20 August in our own Theatrette, so if you can come along and support these students you won’t be disappointed!

Whole School Assembly

Yesterday was a great time of celebration as our Middle School led our whole school assembly. We were inspired with the message that God is a creative being and we are to imitate him in the way we creatively respond to his creation. Thanks once again to the student musicians who led us in singing – we are getting better each time as a school community as we sing together!! It was great to also see the puppets in action and to see the Middle school providing such a fun and exciting assembly, particularly for our junior students.

FOCUS On... English

Secondary English is largely a study of stories.

There are fictional stories that take us into a different world, with new friends to accompany us. Some are stories told through the media that bend and shape what we think and feel, that tell us that this is the new, must have, toothbrush. Others are stories about real people, events and experiences that occur in the world around us.

We also learn to tell our own stories.

How to construct a setting or context, to give voice to believable characters, to plot a course for the story to travel with peaks, troughs, twists and turns. How to express emotion that leads our readers to empathy and vicarious experience.

We learn about the story that language tells, in writing and when spoken. How tone, phrasing, pause, and repeat, all speak certain ideas or feelings to us.

Stories are incredibly powerful.

At the recent ITEC Conference, the key theme was ‘Reading Word and World’. Secondary English plays a pivotal role in helping students discern what stories they are hearing, and how to read what this story is really trying to say. To identify the devices, means and structures that are used every day in the world around us to present certain meanings, feelings and beliefs; just like any author does. Furthermore, Secondary English gives students the tools to join the conversation, to be able to communicate and construct their own perspectives and insights.

In all this we also point students back to the original author, the most creative and compelling story ever written, the true story of the world.

It is a joy to go on this journey with our students as we teach them to learn to read, and find their voice in this world of many competing stories.

Thanks to all the teachers and students who participated!

Parent Seminars

On Tuesday night, Nicole and I were pleased to spend a couple of hours with over thirty of our newer parents as we shared about some of the important things that underpin the vision and mission of our school. The recognition that we are shaped by some sort of story that informs our worldview and the challenge, therefore, of living out of a biblical worldview was presented. As parents and teachers, we were encouraged to ‘claim back’ and celebrate our role as one of the main ‘story-tellers’ in our children’s lives. Thanks to those who attended and your willingness to engage in discussion around these ideas.

Information Nights in the Senior School

Over the next two Thursday nights, the Senior School will host important Information Nights for parents and students as they transition into, and through the Senior School. Crucial information about VCE subject selection and entrance to tertiary courses will be presented tonight to our Year 10s. Next week, the Year 9 students will hear about all that awaits them in Year 10. If you are unable to attend, please contact Roger (VCE Coordinator) or Amelia (VET Coordinator) with any questions or concerns. We look forward to seeing you there!

JP Hands to Help Others

On Tuesday 28 July, Junior Primary classes held a bake sale to raise money for two World Vision projects that focus on Preschool Education for Indigenous Children and Sending a Girl to School. The JP children worked very industriously and enthusiastically to bake and make honey joys, fruit kebabs and delicious decorated biscuits. We raised an amazing $351.20. Thank you to all the generous JP families for donating cooking ingredients and a special thanks to all the parents who helped us to bake, make and sell our goodies.

Kaye
Junior Primary Teacher and Cluster Leader
**MECS Notes**

**Working Bee Reminder**

If you haven’t participated in a Working Bee this year, it’s not too late to join the fun and avoid a $150 charge.

Working Bee dates for the remainder of the year are:
- 17 October
- 14 November
- 5 December

If you haven’t already signed up, and would like to come along on any of these dates, please contact me at the office or email me directly.

_Paula_
Admin Assistant

**Primary GT (Get Together) Dates**

9am in the PUMP room
Parents Welcome

Term 3
- Week 4 Monday August 10 MPA
- Week 5 Monday August 17 JPS
- Week 7 Monday August 31 SPC

Term 4
- Week 6 Monday November 16 JPRH
- Week 8 Monday November 30 JPT
- Week 10 Monday December 14 Prep Christmas GT

**MS Art**

**Friends of MECS**

**Woolworths Earn and Learn**

Please remember to collect these stickers if you shop at Woolworths. The program allows us to redeem stickers for educational materials for the school. Stickers need to be placed onto the ‘Earn & Learn sticker sheets’ - available from Woolworths, online or from the school office. Only 60 stickers can be placed on each sheet. The sheets can be dropped into the collection box in the Main Office. Many thanks.

_Ann_
Community Relations Assistant

**Entertainment Book**

Don’t miss out on purchasing your book. I will finish selling them in the next couple of weeks. Order through the office or go online at: www.entbook.com.au/193f695.

_Evelyn_

**Food Handling Course - Last Chance**

MECS is offering a Food Handling Course: Level 1 which will be run by Glenn Booth, a qualified chef and the Hospitality teacher at Ranges TEC. At the conclusion of the course you will receive a certificate. The course will be run over two evenings, Wednesday August 5 and Wednesday August 12, from 6 - 9pm in the Main Staff room at MECS. Limited places available. No cost involved. Please email Ann by Friday (tomorrow) to reserve a place.

_Nicole_
Community Relations Officer

**Prayer Chain**

Did you know our school has a prayer chain? Did you know that you could play an important role in our school simply by praying for the needs of our teachers, other staff and families? We are all hopeful for our children, for their futures and the directions their lives might take. We are hopeful that they will grow and learn in a loving and supported community. Because my hope rests in our Lord, I am a part of the prayer chain. Please join us as we support the staff and community as a whole in this way. If you’d like to receive weekly emails of prayer and praise for our community please email me at prayer@mecs.vic.edu.au.

_Kerrie_
Prayer Coordinator

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**Year 7/8 Performing Arts Presents…**

**Find Your Voice**

An Original Production written by Jemimah Rankcom and Britney Bailey
(edited by Mrs Annora Hummerston 2015)

**Wednesday August 12, 7.30pm**

Senior School Theatrette - Gold Coin Donation

Bookings are encouraged to ensure we have adequate seating. Please use the Booking Forms in the Main Office and in your CS Classroom.
Music Notes

Jodie is Back

Mrs Jodie P is back from Maternity Leave and returns into the role of Instrumental Music Coordinator. Feel free to contact her for anything relating to the program. A huge thank-you to Brett for looking after the program while she was away.

Would you like to learn a musical instrument?

We have several vacancies available for instruments such as voice and piano. If you would like to enrol, please pick up a form from the office or email Jodie.

Year 9 and 10 Performing Arts Performance

The Dandenong Ranges Youth One Act Play Festival

Since the start of the year we have been practising 'Only Children', a production written by our own teacher, Mrs Marlene M. This play is based on a true story; it is about an old woman who looks back at an event that has haunted her for 60 years. In 1954 fifty children were taken on a beach picnic under the supervision of two teachers and three teenage volunteers. The day ended in tragedy.

Last Saturday we performed the play at the Dandenong Ranges Youth One Act Play Festival in Emerald. The performance went really well and the adjudicator commented on how the actors didn’t lose focus and had obviously put in a lot of rehearsal time. She also said that there was a good balance of dialogue and staging (the performance was non-naturalistic and involved ensemble movement). We came home with lots of awards. Bethany won ‘Actor Showing Most Potential’, Erica won ‘Best Female Actor’ and Brenton won ‘Best Supporting Male’. We also won ‘Best Production’! Even though the whole cast was really excited to win, we were also just happy to be there and perform the play and we had a lot of fun. So congratulations to the whole cast!

We would also like to give a massive thank-you to Marlene for organising costumes, makeup, rehearsals and for putting in a lot of time and effort and much more.

It was a really great experience, I really enjoyed it and I can’t wait for our next performance.

If you would like to watch our production there is another performance for family and friends Thursday 20 August, in the evening.

Jacinta, Year 9

I think it went very well, much better than expected. It was quite rewarding, and I’m not just talking about our awards.

Erica, Year 9

Jodie, Year 9

Paige & Isabelle

Siennah, Beth, Brenton, Kyle & Lucas

For Families with Surnames E - M

Wednesday 19th August 7-9:30pm
Senior School Theatrette
High Tea Provided

mecs matters
Excerpts from Student Writing about AIA

At Australian International Academy (AIA) a speech was given by the principal. He seemed angry, was intense, but was worth listening to him. We then participated in an ice-breaker activity, where we, in mixed school groups, looked up verses in the Bible, the Qur'an and the Torah.

At the start of recess some people played sport, and later during recess some AIA students joined in.

The talk on Christianity was given by Mr Hunter. He relayed the parable of the Prodigal Sons and allowed for questions to be asked. An Islamic teacher presented a talk about the 5 pillars of Islam and other core beliefs. He mentioned that Muslims used to face north when praying, but now they face Mecca.

During the talk the call to prayer came and all the AIA students and some of their teachers left to pray. The bell was distracting and overpowering.

At the end of the speech Mr Hunter and the Islamic teacher were up the front for open question time.

Overall it was an enjoyable and thought provoking day.

**Daniel**

I think it was really worthwhile to meet and interact with the students from AIA. It gave me a much clearer picture of what the Islamic faith is really like. Although learning about Islam in class is a good thing and was very informative, there are some things that you can only learn through experience.

**Erica**

I found the excursion to AIA really helpful. Being able to experience the Islamic faith in person was a real eye-opener. It was interesting to find out how many similar views Islam has to Christianity. With so much media on the Islamic faith at the moment, it was good to put faces to the religion and see that they were people, just like us. Not everything the media wants us to believe about Muslim people is true!

**Brenton**

It was worthwhile visiting AIA because it enabled me to communicate with people of a different religion. It was good to be able to form my own opinion about Islam. I learnt that Islam and my own religion (Christianity) are quite similar. We share the same values and both believe in a higher power.

**James**

I realised that I don’t really know many people from different cultures.

It was definitely worthwhile to get the opportunity to really see things from a different perspective, and meet some new people. We got a better understanding of Islamic beliefs by hearing firsthand from people who follow the religion, and it was also interesting to hear about how they see Christianity.

**Becky**

It was a very good experience, going to an Islamic school. I was given many new insights into areas where previously I only had biased speculation. Many bad things I thought I knew about Islam were actually false.

**Malcolm**

I enjoyed experiencing the differences but also discovering the similarities between both religions, especially in their morals and principles. I had not really met anyone Muslim, so going to the AIA opened my eyes on how they worked, what their beliefs were and how they lived their different religious lives. I have not been exposed to too many religions aside from Christianity, but now, I think I will try harder to branch out and never be close-minded.

**Jasmine**

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**Daniel**

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**James**

I realised that I don’t really know many people from different cultures.
On 24 July the Year 6 boys headed off to Oasis Christian Campsite. When we arrived we headed into the gym for a little introduction and then split into groups for our activities. Our group started ‘Initiatives’ first. My favourite team challenge was the laser game. There was a spider-like net that was the ‘laser wall’; you had to get everyone from one side of the net to the other, but you could only use each hole once! After Initiatives we headed back into the gym and ate our recess. When everyone had finished eating we went to our next activity, which was the low ropes course. It was a challenge but we did it! After that we went over to the archery area. Archery is harder than you would think, but I enjoyed it quite a lot. We then ate lunch in the gym, quite excited to ride the flying fox! We had two turns each. Lastly we had crate stacking. Marcos got an amazing 18 crates! I loved Positive Boys day.

Josiah
Year 6 Student
## Calendar

### 2015 Term 3 Week 2: 27 July - 2 August

**Thur 30 July**
- 2016 Year 11 & 12 Information Session 7.30pm Theatrette
- Year 9/10 Performing Arts Production 7.30pm Theatrette

**Fri 31 July**
- K4 Grandparents Day

### 2015 Term 3 Week 3: 3 - 9 August

**Mon 3 August**
- MP Yarra Valley Excursion

**Tues 4 August**
- Year 9 & 8 AFL & Netball
- Primary GT 9am PUMP Room run by JPS

**Wed 5 August**
- VCE Studio Art Excursion
- Food Handling Course Week 1, 6pm Staffroom

**Thur 6 August**
- K3 Rosellas Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
- 2016 Year 10 Information Evening

**Fri 7 August**
- K4 Excursion to Montrose Park

### 2015 Term 3 Week 4: 10 - 16 August

**Mon 10 August**
- Primary GT 9am PUMP Room run by MPA

**Tues 11 August**
- Year 11 & 12 AFL & Netball
- SP Futsal Clinic Excursion

**Wed 12 August**
- SP Futsal Clinic Excursion
- Food Handling Course Week 2, 6pm Staffroom
- Find Your Voice, Year 7/8 Production, 7.30pm Theatrette

**Thur 13 August**
- Myuna Animal Ark Incursion K3 & Busybees Wilsons Prom Camp Meeting Staffroom 7.30pm

### 2015 Term 3 Week 5: 17 - 23 August

**Mon 17 August**
- Primary GT 9am PUMP Room run by JPS
- Year 7 & 8 AFL & Netball

**Tues 18 August**
- SP Futsal Clinic Excursion

**Wed 19 August**
- SP Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
- Prep Chesterfield Farm Excursion
- K4 Kew Traffic School Excursion
- SP Futsal Clinic Excursion
- Music Recital 7pm Theatrette

**Thur 20 August**
- SS Connect Morning Tea 8.45am Staffroom
- Year 9/10 Performing Arts Production 7.30pm Theatrette

## 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.

### Basketball Players Wanted

**Is your child interested in playing basketball?** We are currently recruiting players for the next Summer season beginning in October 2015. New players are welcome - boys & girls age 5 and up, any level of experience or none at all.

Boys play on Saturdays, Girls Under 10 and below play Tuesdays, Girls Under 12 to U21's play Wednesdays.

Training will commence on Tuesdays at 4.45pm to 5.30pm at Yarra Hills Secondary College Reay Road Mooroolbark starting 4 August to 8 September. Just come down and bring a basketball if you have one. This is an open training to boys and girls of all ages.

Contact Natalie Johnson 0400 882 273, montrosewikings.org.au.

### Montrose Fire Brigade Garage Sale

We need your donations of saleable items to help fund the Montrose CFA. Have a winter clean out. What ever you can spare will be gratefully accepted. Pickups can be organised either by phone 0419 100 837 or email garagesale@montrosesecfa.com.au. Drop off items can be done on Sunday mornings between 10-11.30am to the fire station 877-879 Mount Dandenong Rd (opposite Stradbroke Rd). No Mattresses, box TV cabinets or clothing.

Garage sale will be held on 26 September.

### Nature Discovery Walk and Planting Day for Kids

Sat 1 August, 9-10.30am, Richards Reserve, Montrose, cnr Swanlea Rd and Copeland Drive. Gold coin donation. BYO gumboots or sturdy shoes with enclosed toes, appropriate clothing for weather, water and snacks, kids gardening tools and gloves (can use hands). Booking required to Christina Renowden 0408 532 102 info@leapintonature.com.au. Children must be accompanied by an adult carer. There are no toilets on the reserve.

### Fundraising Sausage Sizzles

In the next few weeks the Senior Ranges TEC students will be running sausage sizzle fundraisers at MECS. All money raised is going towards the Ranges TEC Darwin Trade Mission team. They will be helping out an Aboriginal community called Woolanling in October.

A notice with more details will be coming home soon.

### Apples & Pears

The next delivery will be on Friday 31 July. Please hand your order in to the office in an envelope by 10.30am that morning and ensure you have your name and order written on the front of the envelope, with the correct money enclosed. Varieties available include Fuji, Granny Smith, Pink Ladies, Golden Delicious and Green Pears. Bags are 5-6kg and the cost is $10 for apples and $8 for pears.

**Cassie**

**Receptionist**

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**Notices sent home this week and on Website**

- Yr 9 & 10 Performing Arts Final Details (last week)
- Parent Letter Term 3 Music Recital (last week)
- Open Village Term 3 Newsletter
- SS VICTER 2018 Notice (last week)
- JPT Homework Letter
- JPRH Homework & Parent Helper Letter

Newsletter deadline is **11am Tuesday** on published week.

Email articles (images attached as jpg) to the Newsletter Office.