What happens before heading off to MS Camp!

Emma, Lucas & Sophie filming - story page 7
Are we turning Christianity into a Joke?

The light turned yellow as he approached the traffic lights. He did the right thing and stopped at the light, even though he might have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tailgating woman behind him was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration, as she missed her chance to get through the intersection.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer.

The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door.

She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, “I’m very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, giving the guy in front of you the finger and swearing and cursing at him. I noticed the ‘What Would Jesus Do’ bumper sticker, the ‘Choose Life’ license plate, the ‘Follow Me to Sunday School’ bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the boot, so naturally…

I assumed you had stolen the car.”

This ‘joke of the week’ featured in my husband’s golf club newsletter last week. After a frustrated sigh because it is so easy for others to try and ‘catch us out’ in our behaviours in order to bring scorn and derision on the Christian faith, it did provoke my thinking in the following ways.

Firstly, it is a reasonable expectation that Christians try and live up to what the Bible calls us to. It would be too easy to say that the behaviour of the woman in the joke could be justified and excused in some way. She was having a bad day, she normally wouldn’t behave in this way, she was in a hurry, one can’t be expected to be good all the time….

To call ourselves a Christian, let alone, emblazon it across our cars, means we do need to give attention to the way we behave. A simple reminder of the fruit of the Spirit as discussed in Galatians Chapter 5, reminds us that we need to act out of patience and self-control, not out of impatience. Our faith should make a difference to the way we drive and interact with other drivers because faith should impact all aspects of our lives, not just the overtly ‘religious bits’. The policeman was right to assume that there seemed to be some conflict between what was being professed and what he witnessed.

In the same way, we need to consider our behaviour when waiting in the frustratingly long checkout queue, when a decision goes against your team at a sporting event, when waiting your turn behind the indecisive customer, when on the receiving end of bad service, when held up by a delayed flight. It is so easy for us to respond in anger, frustration or annoyance. And yet…our ongoing transformation as the people of God calls for a different response. We don’t want to turn Christianity into a joke because of a poor choice of words and actions.

However, this sort of joke or critique also provides us with an insight into how many people ‘see’ Christians and Christianity. This joke, and much of the media commentary about Christians, shows us that many people have a very limited understanding of faith. They see it as adherence to some strict moral code and that’s about it. It’s all about what we do and what we don’t do. No wonder they see our human failings as hypocrisy.

The opportunity to engage more fully with our non-Christian friends and family members is one we must embrace. Not because we don’t want to be the butt of their jokes, but because we want them to understand the truth about the gospel. To be a Christian and to believe in the truth about the gospel is to be accepted and loved by a God who accepts us with all our faults and inconsistencies. To be a Christian is not about living a perfect life and being ‘good’ all the time. Somewhere we need to get this message out there, otherwise Christians and the church will continue to be ridiculed for not ‘living up’ to society’s expectations.

As Christians, we are always going to disappoint those around us; that’s part of being human! But as we gather together in authentic Christian communities, it is our desire that the ‘heart’ of what we are on about will come through. It will provide grace and forgiveness when our actions don’t match our words, but it will also provide a welcoming space for others to see what the true story of the gospel is all about.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

Narelle
MECS Principal

MP Community BBQ

Last week, Middle Primaries invited their parents to come and have a BBQ dinner with them and get a sneak peak of what we have been up to so far this term. The night started off with a bang, with the students showing their parents various experiments showcasing our scientific investigations in our Core Studies topic ‘Change Happens’. Experiments included mixing Coke and Mentos, blowing up balloons with vinegar and bi-carb soda and lighting cotton balls on fire! It was lovely to see each student taking the time to serve their parents before themselves when it was time to eat, and we hope they all thoroughly enjoyed their evening.

Justine
Middle Primary Teacher
Cook Off

Thanks to Amy and her group of parent and student volunteers, we now have 85 meals in our community freezer to help families and staff in need of support! We really appreciate their hard work last Friday and the donations of food and money to make this happen. We are looking at other ways that families might be able to support this initiative as we know this aspect of our community support is much appreciated by the families who receive meals. Please let Nicole, our Community Relations Officer, know if there are people in our community who need a helping hand, whether it be for a home-cooked meal or in some other way.

Grandparents and Special Friends Day

One of the highlights of the MECS calendar is the Grandparents and Special Friends Day which was held today in our Primary School. Every classroom was filled with special activities as over 300 visitors came to support our primary students. I love the sound of excited chatter and laughter as students ‘show-off’ their school. I also love meeting and hearing the stories of our grandparents and special friends – many of them have had a long history associated with MECS and it is great to see them each year. I also know that many of our visitors travel a long distance to be here; we value the support you show to your grandchildren and other special young people in your lives. It is a blessing for our young people to grow up in such supportive families and networks.

FOCUS

Midnight Oil in their song, ‘Beds are Burning’ sang the lyrics: ‘Four wheels scare the cockatoos From Kintore East to Yuendumu The western desert lives and breathes In forty five degrees’

We experience a little of that western desert when we take our annual trek to Yuendumu to spend time and build relationships with the community there. Learning the Warlpiri language, and respecting Warlpiri Indigenous culture has been an integral part of MECS for a very long time, and is something that drew me to this school. It will be my first Centre Trip this year, and I look forward to it with a mixture of excitement and trepidation.

In Aboriginal Studies this year, our focus has broadened. We continue to grow in our understanding of Indigenous culture and in the fostering of respect for Indigenous culture, both of the Warlpiri people of Central Australia and of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners and custodians of this area in Victoria.

Some of the questions that we are thinking through, questions that engage our minds, our hearts, and hopefully our hands in service towards our neighbours include:

- What does it mean to respect our First Nations peoples?
- What is our response to the difficult history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples?
- How can we respond to the needs of Indigenous people around us?
- How do we stand with those who are disadvantaged and hurting?
- Is there a way forward towards reconciliation?

So we begin by learning and listening. We are learning of the way the Aboriginal nations carried out their role as custodians of the land, appointed by God as stewards under him, since the dawn of our land.

We learn of the intersection of the history of the indigenous people and Europeans. It is a history that challenges us, as it includes the dispossession and grave injustices that accompanied invasion, and of the legacy that has been left. It is also the story of resistance and of heroes and of survival in the face of great odds. It is a part of who we are as a nation, as a people. It is history, but it is more than history.

Our learning begins by listening to Aboriginal voices; from the past, and also the present, to understand the Aboriginal perspective on our shared life together. We listen to elders of the community, to learn of their wisdom and culture.

It is a challenging journey, but a worthwhile one.

Natalie
Aboriginal Studies & MS Teacher

Parent Teacher Meetings

Our online parent teacher meeting booking system is now open for this round of meetings and we look forward to seeing many of you over the next two weeks. As we continue to improve the way we do these meetings here at MECS, one of the most significant changes this time round is that all secondary meetings will happen in the gym. This is to facilitate the increasing number of students, and also the fact that many teachers are now teaching across the Middle and Senior Schools. We hope that by having all secondary meetings in the one place, this will facilitate a smooth transition for all concerned from one meeting to the next.

Middle School Camps

The Middle School has been a much quieter place this week with most of our students away on camps. Our Year 9s have been in the city all week enjoying a range of experiences, including going on a tour of either the Arts Centre or the MCG, visiting the Magistrates Court and enjoying the delights of the Queen Vic Market. Meanwhile, our Year 8s participated in a range of outdoor activities at Clifford Park Scout Camp at the beginning of the week, and the Year 7s in the second half of the week. Thanks to all our teachers and parent volunteers who make these camps possible. We look forward to sharing some of their stories and pictures in the newsletter next week.
Last week we received the great news that the 3CKids After School program will be running at MECS for the rest of the year.

While numbers started low, enrolments have increased enough to keep the service running. We have a lovely new leader called Hayley who is running great programs – the students love her! Parents are appreciating the convenience the program offers. Depending on your government rebate a session can cost on average $8-12 per session. If you have been thinking about using the service please contact the office for an online link or information pack.

Nicole
Community Relations

Term 1 Parent Teacher Meetings & SSGs
Tues 15 March
(PS: 3:45-6pm/ Secondary: 4-5pm)
Thurs 17 March
(PS: 3:45-6pm/ Secondary: 4-9pm)
Mon 21 March
(PS: 3:45-9pm/ Secondary: 4-9pm)

World’s Greatest Shave
My name is Lucas and I am taking part in The World’s Greatest Shave. I think it would be awesome if you would sponsor me or anyone else taking part in this event. A lot of people suffer from Leukaemia. The World’s Greatest Shave isn’t one of those guilt-tripping ads that tell you to sponsor tigers because they’re being poached, it’s got a happier theme because it knows that some people will pull through and get to say “I beat cancer!” and by making a donation you can help out with that a tremendous amount. Sponsoring also helps families and researchers as well as reducing the stigma associated with bald heads/cancer.

I have been purposely growing my hair for over a year for this event, and plan to shave mid-March. I will be donating my hair to a Melbourne Wigmaker, who specifically uses hair from this event only for wigs for people undergoing chemotherapy. I am hoping to raise $1000, and am currently at 42% of that goal. To donate, please go to www.worldsgreatestshave.com and click on ‘sponsor someone’. Search for ‘Lucas Dickason’ and enter the amount you wish to sponsor. Thank you!

Lucas
MECS Student
Cook Off Day

Last Friday we had a hard working team cooking up a storm and filling our Community Freezer, producing 85 meals!

Thank you to Amy for all the planning and preparation and for running a smooth day; to all the volunteers for the hours of chopping and cooking and to those of you who donated groceries and money - we couldn’t run these days without you!

Facebook

Did you know that MECS has 3 facebook pages? Check them out and ‘Like’ the pages for updates.

https://www.facebook.com/Mount-Evelyn-Christian-School-MECS/
https://www.facebook.com/MecsKindergarten/
https://www.facebook.com/MecsPastStudents/

Nicole
Community Relations

Ranges TEC is Catering to MECS

MECS Canteen is the first appointment of Ranges Catering Services. To get started Ranges TEC students worked on reconditioning and rust proofing the new (second-hand) chiller trailer in which to transport the food. Then the students prepared ‘tasters’ for the MECS community to try over 2 Fridays. And now it all begins this Friday!

Heather
Newsletter Editor

MECS Notes

Primary Athletics

Dear Parents,

Our Primary Athletics Day will be held on Wednesday March 23 at Morrison Reserve.

This year it will only be for Year 1-6 students. The Foundation students will have their own athletic competition later in the year.

More details will be sent closer to the date.

Looking forward to a great day.

Jason
Primary Sport Coordinator

MECS Canteen News

The MECS Canteen opens this Friday 11 March. We will be using the Flexischools Online Ordering System which makes it easy for you to order and pay for your child’s canteen order without the fuss of sending money to school. Please note: all orders for the Friday Canteen Day must be made by 12pm on the Monday of that week. (So if you are wanting to order something for Friday 18 March, then your order will need to be placed by 12pm Monday 14 March.)

Flexischools is a simple four-step process:

1. Register
Logon to flexischools.com.au and register, then add your child’s details

2. Top-Up
Top up your account via Visa, Mastercard, PayPal or direct debit

3. Order and Pay
Select the ‘Canteen’ option and place your order

4. 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 even if you have forgotten, you can log in from anywhere before the 12pm cut-off time on a Monday.

We are looking forward to receiving your orders!

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via email.

Blessings,

Vicky
MECS Canteen
On Wednesday March 2, we took 10 guys and 9 girls down to Cranbourne to play basketball against several other Christian schools. It was a very hot day and they all played 5 games, virtually back to back, but still every player gave of their best and kept playing hard until the final siren.

Ashlin captained the girls’ team admirably. They had three straight wins to set them up well for their final group game against Bayside, who were also undefeated. Unfortunately, due to the fact that Bayside had a team full of girls who play basketball competitively, and a coach, the MECS girls were not able to shoot as many baskets as Bayside. However, this still meant that the girls finished second and so played off for the flag. Much to their credit, even though they were worn out and very hot, they fought back in the second half and posted a very admirable score. Congratulations girls on a wonderful second place!

Well done also to Jasmine Harris, Asher, and Jenna who placed first in an event as well. Congratulations to the Year 7 girls team who won both their freestyle and medley relay.

Thanks to the students for making it a wonderful day and well done to Luke and Anne-Maree for their organisation! It was wonderful to see students in their element and using their gifts in the pool.

Nicky
Cycle A Teacher & Transition Coordinator

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The boys were lead by dual captains, Lachie and Joshua. Not only did they organise the starting 5 and all the subs they also led from the front with high quality basketball skills. The boys started with a win and then a loss. However, the third game was probably their best in that they re-grouped after the loss and came out with all guns blazing, jumping out to a substantial lead against Heritage College and then finishing off with a tremendous win. Another loss saw the boys enter the finals to play off for 3rd and 4th position. This time Heritage College got the jump on them, but the boys fought back valiantly, coming down to the possibility of a super-hero 3 pointer on the buzzer – which unfortunately went just wide.

Congratulations boys on a superb 4th place!

As a MECS teacher, I was proud to travel with these students; they all represented the school excellently!

Tim
Cycle A Teacher

Luke Knoll, Anne-Maree Forbes and myself took 34 enthusiastic students to the Interschool Swimming carnival on Thursday March 3. The students were amazing in their attitude to the day and really enjoyed themselves. MECS went very well in terms of competition against the other schools, coming first and second most of the time. In the end we came third overall and were very proud of the efforts of all of our students.

Some special mentions for the day were Thomas (Year 7) who won all 5 of his individual races, Luke (Year 10) who won 2 races and Steph (Year 8) who won 3 races, including breaking a record for 50m freestyle.

Well done also to Jasmine Harris, Asher, and Jenna who placed first in an event as well. Congratulations to the Year 7 girls team who won both their freestyle and medley relay.

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Nicky
Cycle A Teacher & Transition Coordinator
**Year 12 PE Excursion**

Last Tuesday the VCE Physical Education class spent the day at O’Brien Group Arena ice-skating and learning to play ice hockey. The day was filled with lots of laughter, frantic arm waving, and some fairly impressive spills... not to mention sore muscles in the days following. This was a great opportunity to learn a new sport and explore the variety of factors that influence whether individuals are likely to be physically active and commence participation in new sports such as ice skating. While many students were lacking ‘self-efficacy’ at the beginning, throughout the day they developed confidence and skill and by the end were, quite literally, skating rings around me.

*Emma*

Yr 12 PE Teacher

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**Year 7 Camp Prep**

On Monday and Tuesday this week, Year 7 students have worked in their camp groups to come up with a group name, banner, chant, noise, dance/move/pose, mascot, motto, and slogan. Each student contributed ideas and worked in their area of skill to help their group have identity, fun, encouragement and purpose. This was in preparation for some of the challenge activities to take place on camp. Each group also rotated through a filming activity to offer some advice on transition to Middle School, for those in Year 6.

*Anne-Marie*

Health/PE Teacher

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**MECS Notes**

**Mel**

We are very excited to announce that Mel (Class of '10) has been selected by the leaders of the Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors Program together with the Australian Training Awards and the Australian Embassy in Beijing to talk to students in China about the benefit of vocational education training (VET).

Mel informed me that in Australia about 40% of school leavers go on to university, and consequently we have a skills shortage within the workforce. China has 80% go on to university, so there is a more severe lack of technical skills. Australia is in some ways partnering with China to help them create an outstanding VET sector like ours and also that of renowned industrial countries such as Germany.

So Mel, over the course of this week will be visiting 4 polytechnics (TAFE) across Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing and Shanghai. She will be speaking to the students (male and female), teachers and parents at these polytechnics, who are undertaking the equivalent of a diploma. Mel will share details of her apprenticeship journey and the challenges, rewards and benefits of training. The purpose of this is to encourage and inspire these students in their vocational education, as well as help to eventually change the perception of VET as a lesser option in the eyes of students and parents alike. She tells me that these are issues that we are also combating in Australia, as we desperately need more young people choosing VET as a pathway into their career. She believes that VET is a fantastic study option these days, and can provide a great career start into many industries, as well as further education.

Our school was founded on the premise that all students are gifted and that all gifts are to be used in our full orbed worship of God. While academic gifts are important, they are no more important than the ‘hands on’ gifts. Mel as a student was incredibly gifted academically but also with her hands and at the end of her VCE chose an apprenticeship pathway to work rather than a University route. She is a qualified Fitter and Turner, the current title holder of the Australian Apprentice of the Year and an Australian Apprenticeships Ambassador for the Australian Government. She is currently working at Hargo Engineering in Croydon. We at MECS are extremely grateful to God for her ongoing witness to Christ in this important area of life.

*Dr Roger*

VCE Coordinator
School Photo Day - Monday March 21
All students would have received a notice with detailed information as well as a Photo Order Form envelope. Optional Family Photo Order forms are available from the Main and Senior School offices. Payment can be made online (for orders via the internet), or by cash, cheque, money order or credit card via the envelope. Family Photos must be ordered using the Family Photo Envelopes or online, and cannot be included with normal photo envelopes. You can order and pay for siblings orders in one envelope if desired. Please return your photo envelope/s by Friday 18 March. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Unit for rent in Lilydale
Fully self contained 1 bedroom unit. $250 pw including utilities.
Contact Brett on 0400 486 430 or email greenplumb@rocketmail.com.

ASK - Autism Spectrum Kids
A free social skills group for young people 10 – 15 who live in the Yarra Ranges. 8 week program facilitated by trained Counsellors at Youth Services in Lilydale (216-218 Main St Lilydale), on Tuesdays from April 19 to June 7, 4.30pm - 6pm.
Topics covered include:
• Managing emotions
• Friendship skills
• Social problem solving
• Assertive communication
• Managing fear and anxiety

There will be a 30 minute chat prior to commencement of group with each participant and their parent/ carer. For more info please call Michele or Amanda on 9294 6716. Places are limited so bookings are essential.

Scholastic Book Club
Scholastic Book Club is coming to MECS in the next few days. Look out for the catalogues with order instructions attached. There are two options to order – the catalogues with order instructions or the catalogues online. The cut-off date for orders is March 23.

Each family places an order with Scholastic Book Club, MECS will receive credit to use on the purchase of new books. The proceeds from the credits earned will be used to support underprivileged schools.

For further information or questions see Simone or from JPB.

PTO
PTO is currently open and active for booking Parent Teacher Meetings and Primary and Middle School SSG appointments. If you have not received your log in details or you have any questions, please contact Corrie in the main office or email her.

Urgent: House needed
A large family with six children urgently needs a house to rent. Preferably located in surrounding suburbs to MECS. Please contact the office if you can help.

Get Active Sports
Get Active Sports run sports programs for 3 to 8 year olds on weekend mornings. Tennis for Juniors will be held at Bimbadeen Heights Primary School Gym, Hayrick Lane, Mooroolbark. Ideal for beginners.

Starts Saturday 16 April:
3 and 4 year olds - 9.45am to 10.30am
5 and 6 year olds - 10.30am to 11.15am
7 and 8 year olds - 11.15am to 12.00pm
Cost $90 for 6 weekly sessions and a tennis racquet for you to keep.

To secure your place, you must register by one of the following methods:
• Email - rego@getactivesports.com.au
• Phone - 1300 772 106
• www.getactivesports.com.au

Eastern Ranges Football Holiday Camp
April 1, 9.30am-3pm, Rowville Secondary College, Eastern Campus, Humphreys Way, Rowville. $100 per player. This will be a development and testing holiday program for junior footballers Years 12-15. Lunch, snacks and drinks provided. Registrations visit http://bit.ly/1VPslEz. They close Mar 29.

Marc.d’cruze@aflvic.com.au

Apple Man
The Apple Man is coming again on Friday March 18 and the following varieties will be available: Granny Smiths, Fujis, Royal Galas and Green Pears. Apples $10 a bag and pears $8. Please put the correct money in an envelope with your order written on the front, and hand it into the office before 10.30am on Friday March 18.

Next Working Bee
Sat 19 Mar, 8am-1pm
with Morning Tea

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

Click to see full image.