Whole School Assembly Fun

Ethan playing in the Middle School Band during the Whole School Assembly
My Mountain, Your Valley

Two stories alongside one another from Matthew 17.

Firstly, “Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”

And then, “When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, and said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him.”

All but the Gospel of John tell the story of the Jesus’ transfiguration and each end their account with the story of the ‘demon-possessed’ boy. It’s so easy to read these stories and be more impressed with the ‘theologically significant’ moment of Jesus’ transfiguration, and be disconnected from the drama playing out below. Without doubt, what was happening on top of the mountain was significant. This moment reveals Jesus for who He truly is, fully divine, above both the Law and the Prophets (as symbolised by Moses and Elijah), foretelling his death and predicting his resurrection. This is what the Christian story hangs on! Meanwhile, below in the valley, is the real stuff of life. The cry and anguish of a father whose son is severely afflicted and as a result, rejected by the community.

The ‘meanwhile’ situations abound in our own community and the wider world. Alongside the pure joy and celebration of seeing new life come into the families of our students and staff in recent days, there are those who are struggling with injury, illness, unemployment and mental health issues. Instances of violence erupt with alarming frequency around the world. Our news services zero in on the tragic distortions of human behaviour. I’m sure you can also think of situations known to you that add to life’s extremes of joy and heartache.

So how does glory on the mountain speak to agony in the valley? What does it mean that these stories follow each other in the Biblical account? Did Jesus’ light cast a beam towards those who waited in the dark? Did the crowd glimpse the cloud that descended over Peter, James, and John? Was Jesus oblivious to the drama below him? We’ll never know.

However, writer Debbie Thomas would suggest that there is a tendency to interpret the Bible as if its stories apply only to me — me, an individual. My mountaintop experience. My valley. My relationship with God. She would suggest that this is very misguided. God’s word is spoken to us in the context of community. The reality is that my mountain lies right next to your valley and that your pain does not cancel out my joy. It is entirely possible for one person to sit in church and bask in the presence of God’s Spirit while close by another cries out because the ache of God’s absence feels unbearable. The situation remains the same if applied more widely. We occupy so many mountains, while our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world dwell in valleys of hunger, warfare, violence, and abuse.

Debbie Thomas would say that this is the great challenge to the Christian life and to the Church. To hold the agony of the valley together with the glory of the mountain. What this looks like is not to deny either but embrace both. In our community, out of our love for one another, we stand and celebrate with the joyous, we bring meals and support to the anguished and surround the broken with our love, presence and prayers.

I haven’t forgotten the important end to the two stories. Jesus came down from the mountain and he heals the tormented boy. As we are reminded by the psalmist, hope abounds because ‘Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.’ (Ps 126:5-6)

The testimony that comes from being high on the mountain is birthed in the pain of the valley.

Narelle
MECS Principal

God’s word is spoken to us in the context of community. The reality is that my mountain lies right next to your valley...

Save the Date - Aug 25

Save the date for our upcoming Creative Arts Showcase (formerly known as Instrumental Recital number 3!).

On Thursday August 25 from 7-9.30pm we will be showcasing the musical, artistic, dance and dramatic talents of students from our whole school community. With students from our Instrumental and Classroom programs performing solo and group items, it should be a fantastic night! We are also privileged to have student’s art work being displayed as well as artistic pieces from our Year 9 Elective group who have been beautifying our external school environment. If you need more incentive to book it in, we will be enjoying a delicious supper provided by the lovely Hannah Rowse.

This is the first of hopefully many collaborative evenings that can celebrate and honour the hard work of our creative students and staff.

Hope to see you there!

Annora
Instrumental Music Coordinator
Whole School Assembly

On Tuesday we had a great time of celebration as our Middle School led our whole school assembly. We were inspired by Tim’s message that we are indeed God’s artwork, not in the future or when we grow up, but right now! It was also great to see the Middle School providing such a fun and exciting assembly, particularly for our junior students. Thanks to all the staff who participated in a surprise ‘flash mob’! Who would’ve thought they were such a talented bunch!

Responding to the Student Satisfaction Survey

Hopefully you read Karissa’s piece on student leadership in the newsletter last week. One aspect of the feedback received in the recent Student Satisfaction Survey was that there was not enough leadership opportunities for students. This leadership initiative was already in the pipeline, so we are thrilled that we have now been able to introduce this new program and for there to be such a positive response to it. We look forward to what these emerging leaders can bring to their portfolio areas!

Centre Trip Preparations

Preparations for our annual Year 10 Centre Trip are well underway. Students and staff will be departing on Saturday September 10 at 5.30am and enjoying 15 days together as they travel up through the centre of Australia to Alice Springs and then out to the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu. As always, we know that this experience will be a formative one, not only in developing resilience and maturity, but also in developing a real appreciation and empathy for the issues surrounding indigenous people and their culture. The staff that will be participating in this year’s trip are Roger, Nathan, Natalie, Jonny, Anne-Maree, Nicola, Peter and Fiona. We are grateful that Tim, Alistair, Janette and Krista will also be supporting the staff. Our Centre Trip is an iconic part of the MECS experience and so even at this early stage, we pray for God’s protection and wisdom in all things.

Student and Staff Incursion

It was a great privilege to have Aboriginal singer and songwriter Scott D in our school yesterday. He spent the day with students and then led staff through a great professional learning session. Scott was able to help students and staff explore how we can continue to honour and show support for Indigenous Australians. He addressed the importance of understanding Aboriginal culture and history in order to work towards further reconciliation. His visit was also great input for a number of staff who are considering a more formal Reconciliation Action Plan for our school community.

2017 Enrolments

Our enrolments for 2017 are looking very healthy. Natasha, our Enrolment Manager, has been busy doing many tours around the school and it has been great for me to meet many of our prospective students and families in our formal enrolment interviews. At this stage our ‘big intake’ areas - Kindergarten, Foundation and Year 7 are all full, with a significant number of students also starting with us in the other Primary and Middle school year levels. Many areas of the school are full, and this looks like continuing for the next few years, with many enrolments already confirmed for 2018 and beyond. We are thankful to God that this is a learning community that families want to be part of!

In our Year 10 service projects, students have been provided with multiple opportunities to connect with, serve and learn from a variety of different communities.

Since March, we’ve had groups working at the Salvation Army Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre in The Basin completing a new fence, re-establishing a deck and landscaping around the grounds. Part of our involvement at the centre included hearing the stories of a small number of people going through the program at the moment. This time together was invaluable as the boys learnt some harsh realities from some very honest sharing.

We have had a group working at Melba Services in Lilydale, constructing a concrete slab and erecting a small garden shed. This team is also working on designing and building a fence. The aim is to be working alongside people with disabilities. Each week a couple of students have been helping some of the Melba team put together fruit and vegetable packages.
**MECS Notes**

**Baby Brown**

Congratulations to Jason & Fiona on the arrival of Lincoln Andrew. Born July 22 at 12:39am. Dad looks smitten already!!

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**Thank you from Daniela**

I would like to express my deep gratitude and thanks to all the Junior Primary staff, children, and parents who made my last day, before taking maternity leave, so very special. I have loved reading the gorgeous cards and unwrapping the treasures you spoiled me with. Thank you once again for this incredible, warm-hearted send off.

God bless,

_Daniela_

**Year 9 Special Week Items Needed**

We would appreciate any donations of the following items:

- Tin cans, washed and label removed OR food tins that are painted e.g. coconut milk, olive oil, large tins or any decorative biscuit tins and the like
- Tea cups, saucers, tea pots (lids not needed) and terracotta and ceramic planters
- ANY succulent pieces broken off, with or without roots, in a bag
- Lace doilies, clean fabric, cotton, corduroy, jeans
- Buttons, lace, ribbon, stuffing and wheat

Please leave in the box at the main office or send with your child to Anne-Marie or Mem.

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**3CKidz After School Care**

Have you considered using our After School Care program? The program leader, Hayley, runs a wonderful program for the students.

Here are some testimonies from parents currently using the program -

“Both our girls love this program very much. Haley takes such excellent care of them, playing fun games, planning wonderful and creative activities and preparing healthy and delicious food. Most nights when we pick them up, they are reluctant to leave. We love the positive way the children are encouraged to use kind words and play cooperatively. It is an excellent program.” Naomi

“Abi has really enjoyed going to after school care this year. She looks forward to it every week, and always comes home with some crafty activity she’s been up to! We have found the program affordable and definitely worthwhile for our family. The staff are friendly and easily contactable when changes to care have been required.” Anna.

“It was been wonderful that MECS, with the assistance of 3C Kidz Care has been able to offer an After Care Program for the last two years. Lily has attended one afternoon a week and has enjoyed the variety of activities offered. The leaders from 3C Kidz Care have all been caring and find a wonderful balance between an active program and quieter activities for the later part of the afternoon. As a parent it has been wonderful to have the assistance of an after care program to help with the constant juggle of being a working mum and school hours” Fiona.

Enrolment for families wishing to book in for 2017 will be opening on September 1.

If you would like to know more please contact the main office.

_Nicole_

_Community Relations_
There are places at Busy Bees

Busy Bees is the MECS-run playgroup available to MECS families and families from the community. It is a lovely stepping stone into the Kinder program or just an opportunity to have some fun with Mum or another carer.

There are a small number of places available in our Thursday Morning session from 11.30am - 1.30pm.

If you are interested or you know another family that may like to attend please contact Lynda via playgroup@mecs.vic.edu.au or call the MECS office on 9738 6000.

National Asthma Week Sept 1-7

The theme for National Asthma Week 2016 is Become a Better Breather. National Asthma Week coincides with the beginning of spring and as pollens are a known trigger for asthma, this is an excellent time to ensure your child’s asthma is well controlled. Sections of the Asthma Australia website that can help with asthma management include:

- Take the Asthma Control Test to see if you could make improvements to help your child become a better breather.
- Manage allergies often linked with asthma, including allergic rhinitis (hayfever).
- Did you know? 90% of people with asthma use their medications incorrectly. Check your child’s technique to see if they are getting full benefit from their medication.

Regular review of your child’s asthma with your GP and pharmacist will help them to become a better breather.

Need help with your child’s asthma? Contact our Asthma Assist line on 1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462) and talk to one of our friendly Asthma Health Professionals.

IT Education - Clash of Clans

According to the app creator’s website, Clash of Clans is ‘An epic combat strategy game’. But is it really? Strategy games can be great learning opportunities as well as fun. Or is it just a war game, promoting fighting, destruction, killing or being killed? While you do spend part of the time building your village, armies and defences, it seems that to progress successfully in the game, you need to prey on those players who are weaker or less experienced in order to improve your own position and resources.

So what could you get out of it? Any learning? Perhaps. Enjoyment? Probably. What attitudes does it foster or inhibit? Is it harmless or dangerous? I am reminded here that nothing is neutral and this game has a particular worldview as well. Here are some things to think about.

Age-appropriateness

The developer is very clear that 13 is the minimum age to be playing this game. What do you do when your 8 year-old wants to play and most of his friends are as well?

Consumerism

This game follows a model of many successful games that are free to install but encourage users to buy some form of game currency to speed up progress or enable extra features. You really can’t get very far very quickly without spending real money. I would recommend you turn off In-App purchases on your device. There are many guides on the Internet about how to do this for your particular device. I would also suggest you use prepaid vouchers rather than connect a credit card to your iTunes account.

Content for learning

The fighting or violence aspect of the game was a concern for me. However, these are not graphic. Some characters are a bit gruesome and it does include witches, wizards, goblins and spells, which some parents may object to. Attacks on your village happen automatically and invisibly and you can only ‘play back’ the attack after it has happened, with the supposed ‘learning goal’ of seeing where you can improve your defences.

Chat

The game offers two chat functions. Global chat should be a concern to parents. It is open to any user of the game, and is not moderated. If you join a clan, there is a private chat feature within the clan. If your child wants to join a clan, I would suggest it is only with other children or adults you know personally and that you have an adult moderate the chat and game play. Note they have added a profanity filter in a recent update.

Addiction

It’s addictive! It is designed to make you come back regularly for short periods but very often.

Conclusion

I don’t know everything about Clash of Clans and there will be differing opinions about it. However, I am passionate about grappling with a biblical approach to technology and how to parent faithfully in this area. One challenge is that the Bible doesn’t say anything specific about gaming or technology so what could be a Christian/Biblical approach to this? How do we know what God thinks of this?

Perhaps these are some questions you could consider:

- Does it promote the valuing of human life as made in God’s image?
- Does it encourage loving our neighbour?
- Does it encourage responsible stewardship?
- Does it embrace life or death, forgiveness or revenge?
- Does it aid participation in the restoration of the Kingdom?

There is no ‘right’ answer – you know your kids and what values you want to instil in their lives to flourish and grow faith. Keep conversations open and sensible boundaries in place. May God give you wisdom in your technological parenting!

For the full article check out your June 2015 issue of Nurture magazine.

Mic

ICT Coordinator
The strap, the cane, writing lines and drinking warm bottles of milk: school in the past was certainly a lot different to now. On Tuesday July 26, Junior Primary students had a wonderful afternoon learning about life in the past from their grandparents and friends. Students were particularly fascinated and amazed by the punishments that occurred when someone was naughty at school and very grateful that such things no longer occur. They loved hearing about different games and toys that were played with in the past and seeing some old fashioned dolls, a metal meccano set and even a billy cart. Grandparents, friends and the students had a great time sharing stories together and finishing the afternoon with some card playing. We are very thankful for all our wonderful visitors who gave their time to make this such a rich and valuable learning experience for our students.

**Kaye**

Junior Primary Teacher & Cluster Leader

Our grandparents came to school. We wrote a letter to them and we played games with them. I asked my Nan some questions. When my Nan was naughty she got smacked with a ruler, and it hurt!

**Eli**

Wow! Grandparents Day was awesome! It was the best! We played fun activities. We all had the best time. We asked some questions about what they did when they were kids.

**Keira**

Wow! Grandparents Day was amazing because I played Pick-up Sticks with my Nani, Gran and Grandad. We played ‘shake, rattle and roll.’ I asked them some questions and they told me they went home for lunch. I wish we went home for lunch!

**Lachlan**

On Grandparents Day lots of grandparents came and played with us. We had so much fun with them. We played games like Pick-up Sticks, Uno, cards and many other games. We interviewed them and we found out things about them. Some of our grandparents walked to school. Some of them had hot meals for lunch. Some of them had to walk home to get lunch. At the end of the day Miss Fiona said ‘it has been so nice to see you, but I’m afraid to say it’s time for our grandparents to go’ and everybody said ‘Nnoooo!!’

**Alannah**

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**Alannah**

The Junior Primaries got to put on their special reporting hats as they interviewed some grandparents and special friends this Tuesday. For Core Studies, we have been looking at History and how life was back in the past and comparing it to life now. As a special treat they got to hear fascinating tales about how schooling, technology, toys, food and clothing looked when their grandparents were little.

**Viv**

Junior Primary Teacher
On Tuesday morning, the Middle School organised the Whole School Assembly for Term 3. As always, the assembly was a wonderful celebration of the community and good learning which we enjoy at MECS. The theme of the assembly was Ephesians 2:10, a scripture of particular significance in the Middle School this year:

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Oftentimes, middle schoolers feel they are in an awkward stage, stuck in between being kids of Primary School and the mature young adults of Senior School. As adults, we can remember what it is like to struggle through adolescence and try to find our way through those teenage years. That’s why we love this verse. While we are in transition and experiencing huge changes in ourselves and our world, we are still God’s wonderful handiwork. As Tim said in his fantastic devotion at assembly, we are God’s artwork. In some sense, we are all being moulded and shaped constantly by our maker, but in adolescence it can be hard to see how everything is going to turn out!

Our assembly aimed to showcase some different elements of Middle School, which show God working through the students and staff. This included some creative artwork from Olivia’s classes, inspired ‘Keen on Green’ displays from Anne-Maree’s term tasters, a performance by some talented students and a video educating us on the interest-driven projects from Year 9 Open Village.

A highlight for many was the flash mob. For those who are unaware, a flash mob is a surprise, pop up performance which appears spontaneous. Luckily, it was not spontaneous, and our fearless leader Chris Bishop made sure we had lots of time to practice our amazing moves. Out of nowhere, a cast of teachers burst out of the woodwork and danced to a number of songs, with the finale dance including many staff and students dancing in unison. We were even lucky enough to have a special guest performance by the leadership - they made an incredible band! A huge shout out to Chris, who put in a wonderful effort to cast the flash mob vision, choreograph and plan our performance.

Thank you to all the parents who attended and we look forward to the next Whole School Assembly in Term 4 which will be run by the Year 12s.

Bradley & Nicky
Middle School Teachers
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.

Mount Evelyn Netball Club
Spring Season 2016 Registrations will be on Tuesday August 9, 4.30-5.15pm and Wednesday August 10 from 4.15-5pm at the Netball clubrooms, Morrison Reserve, Mount Evelyn.
Spring Season commences October 8, 2016. Enquiries please call Sheelagh 9736 1132.

Pumped BMX for Girls
A free 6 week cycling activity program for primary school aged girls will be held at the small BMX track at YMCA Mount Evelyn Recreation Camp, Tramway Road starting next Saturday Aug 6.
The program involves cycling activities run by a female coach for girls. The sessions run for an hour each week on a Saturday morning 11.15am-12.15pm on Aug 6, 13, 20, 27 and Sept 3 and 10.
Contact Kyle Chandler 8480 3033 or email pumped@bmxv.com.au for more information or to register.

Rental Property Needed
We are having some renovations done so need somewhere to live for 3 months. We would be keen to talk to anyone who may have a house or bungalow for rent for 3 months starting later in August.
Please contact Tim Payze 0452 278 898.

Apple Man
The Apple Man is coming tomorrow, Friday Aug 5 and the following varieties will be available: Granny Smiths, Fujis, Royal Galas, Pink Ladies and Green Pears. Apples $10 a bag, 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 Aug 5.

First Aid & White Card Courses
Ranges TEC is delivering a course in First Aid Level 2 on August 16 and 23, 4pm-8pm. Course cost is $120.
They are also delivering a White Card course August 30, 4-8pm. Course cost is $110.
Pre-booking essential.
Contact Dee Dee at Ranges TEC 9738 7100 for more details.

Calendar

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Year 10 2017 Information Evening **Tonight**
Thursday August 4, 7.30pm in the Gym

- SP Immigration Museum Excursion (last week)
- JP Olden Days Dress Up Notice (last week)
- 2017 Year 10 VETIS Application Form
- Year 10 Health Assignment Letter to Parents
- Year 9 and 10 AFL Netball Notice
- MP Healesville Sanctuary Excursion
- Primary Olympics GT Notice

Notice sent home this week and on Website www.mecs.vic.edu.au/Resources/Downloads/Notices-Home

- 2016 Term 3 Week 4: 1 Aug - 7 Aug
- 2016 Term 3 Week 5: 8 Aug - 14 Aug
- 2016 Term 3 Week 6: 15 Aug - 21 Aug
- 2016 Term 3 Week 7: 22 Aug - 28 Aug

Newsletter deadline is **11am Tuesday on published week**. Email articles (images attached as jpg) to newsletter@mecs.vic.edu.au