

Thriving through Adolescence
A workshop for boys of grade 8
15th February 2023

Reflections from students

1. Who says only physical fitness is important? Not me nor my batchmates because we have learnt how to tune our emotional and mental health by learning simple skills to excel in life. We welcomed our new Life Skills teacher, Ms. Merlyn Fernandes in mid - November. She first surveyed our age group and understood the problems we faced as adolescents. She found multiple similarities in our problems and had a wonderful thought to address these problems with the whole group on 15th February 2023. She started by helping us identify our core values and encouraging us to introspect. We took notes throughout the session.

Using quotes with a powerful impact such as “You become the product of 5 friends you choose to surround yourself with”, she explained the importance of good company and disadvantages of bad company. She also explained what mob mentality is and how to prevent it. Peer pressure is a good way to get motivated and a bad way to go down. Merlyn Ma’am told us how actions define a person and how bad choices can lead to bad products. The problem of self-esteem was cleared by her in a jiff. She then moved to the topic of love and infatuation and clarified some misunderstood concepts. Towards the end, she spoke about gratitude and we wrote 5 things we were grateful for.

Using cartoons and comical presentations, she made us understand our problems and used case studies to encourage discussion on how we would behave in that situation. We thank Merlyn Ma’am for this session. We also thank Saravanan Sir for helping us and making this session possible.

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2. Respected Merlyn Ma'am, the session was fantastic. It contained a lot of knowledge which one must apply to his/her day to day life. Values! What are they? They are standards of behaviour. It is very important and one must practise it daily. The word SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that everyone should know. Try to be a changemaker and a leader. You must always know when to say yes and when to say no. In this world "Nobody is superior or inferior, everyone is equal". Thank you for teaching this to us ma'am. We must not think too much about our past. You must always know the difference between 'failing' and 'failure'. Failing is when you have a chance to get back up and failure is when you make up your mind that you can't get back up. Maturity! Big word, what is it? Maturing is when you realise what is important and what is not. It is when you know what is correct and what is not. Everyone should be grateful for what they have and what they are. Never be a gullible person. At the end I would like to conclude by saying " everyone grows old but not everyone is growing up". Thank you for teaching us this.

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3. On the 15th of February at 6 pm, all the class 8 boys of Junior School had a counselling session with Ms. Merlyn Fernandes, whose thoughts changed my perspective through which I used to look at life.

I and every teen who was listening to her understood how we must look at life. I also understood that silly mood swings cannot change my path towards a bright future. I learnt how to control such mood swings and other emotional hardships such as extreme sadness and anger. I also learnt to respect others, their space and my own personal space.

Ms. Merlyn taught us that our life is ours and no one should be allowed to control it. But this does not mean that we must not listen to our parents, teachers and elders' advice. We must know that they've experienced life and have 5 times the understanding than us and thus their advice must never be taken for granted.

In short, I learnt the ways of life and that I will have ups and downs but I must be strong and should always get back up and move forwards to a new beginning.

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