RESOURCE REVIEWS

The New Start program

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A health and nutrition curriculum for the primary school

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Nutrition, ***E***xercise, ***W***ater, ***S***unlight, ***T***oxin-free, ***A***ir, ***R***est, ***T***rust in God.

You are what you eat—brain food promotes learning and junk food stymies academic attainment and interferes with athletic and social performance. These are the starting premises of a nutrition program that draws on the Bible and modern research for its application. Critics say students will choose confectionary and soft drink over healthy foods; the advertisers have it all their way. Is there good reason to bother with a concerted effort to promote a healthy lifestyle in the face of such a deluge of processed foods and fast junk food?

In 2008, Lighthouse Christian College, introduced the *New Start* nutrition program in the primary school. This program provided the topics for our SOSE and Science programs for Term 2.

Topics covered over the course of 9 weeks included the following:

- Prep—Healthy food choices; the human body and its needs for growth
- Year 1—Foods from the farm and factory; shopping for healthy food
- Year 2—Foods from around the world; safety in the kitchen
- Year 3—Planning a healthy meal; taste buds; exercise and fitness
- Year 4—Seeds, plants and plant foods
- Year 5—Processed food and unprocessed food; alternatives to junk food
- Year 6—A balanced diet; a study of body systems

New Start provided us with material for a whole term's work, including student work sheets and ideas for hands-on activities.

A student food and fitness diary provided home–school communication as parents worked with the children on challenges that encouraged them to try new healthy foods. Many students were delighted to have their taste buds invigorated by the taste of fresh whole foods. One student commented: "Fast food just doesn't taste so good any more."

Art activities were integrated with the food theme. Children enjoyed making "vegetable men", vegetable prints, as well as charming seed and pasta collages. "My celery stick man reminds me to always eat green things every day and I love his cheeky face, don't you? (Prep student) Some classes grew vegetable seeds and used drawings to record the progress.

At Lighthouse Christian College, we integrate our devotional themes with classroom topics as part of our God-centred curriculum. *New Start* gave us more than just practical tools for SOSE and Science; it provided us with integrated Biblical material. Examples of Biblical principles are as follows: God is our Provider as evidenced in the loaves and fishes story (Matthew 14); God is our Creator, creating the elements to sustain life (Genesis 1); God is Wisdom, evidenced in the wisdom of Solomon (Proverbs). Taking responsibility for our own health and making right choices has its roots in God's Word.

Responsibility, thankfulness, appreciation, integrity, honesty and self-control are amongst the leading behaviours and attitudes observed as students at our school responded to this program. These are some of the Christian values that are the outworking of a true understanding that God is a loving provider who has created the foods that keep our immune systems strong and healthy.

We have noted positive changes to our academic performance and we enjoy a harmonious community within the multicultural student body. This is partly due to the implementation of this program. The *New Start* program has been very beneficial and we will continue to make it an annual focus at our school. TEACH

For more information on this resource, go to www.beaconmedia.com.au/health.htm



New Start students Caleb Stephens and Olivia Simpson [Photography: Timothy Rogers]

Wacky...but true!

A children's magazine

Barbara Fisher
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"I want to subscribe to a magazine for my primary school that has quality content, a Christian focus and preferably no advertising."

That's a tall order these days. Just a quick look at children's magazines in your local newsagent is enough to make you realise there is not much available in Australia that fits such stringent criteria. As a lecturer at Avondale College, teaching literacy and language to our future primary teachers, I am continually on the lookout for quality reading material to recommend to our schools and teachers. Not long ago I found a magazine entitled *Wacky...but true!*, and instantly knew I had found a gem.

The name itself is enough to make kids want to delve into it—after all, they love to read about the wacky side of life and this is a magazine that makes them WANT to read. Each factual story or article is short, compact and just the right length for reluctant readers to tackle. In addition, paragraphs are separated by colour or style to break the stories into manageable sections on each page.

The magazine has 76 pages of full colour fun, with a glossy cover and attractive illustrations or photographs throughout. It is aimed at 8 to 14 year olds, but children as young as 6 years old have been known to enjoy reading it.

The magazine is edited and published by Michelle Down, a primary teacher / librarian. She says she loves doing the writing and research and feels the magazine is filling a gap in providing children with reading material that increases their general knowledge in a fun way. The magazine includes articles from history and nature, stories about people who have done great things for God, and wacky facts from everywhere.

Michelle has recently begun the *InkRoom*, which is an avenue for budding authors to submit their work. Children send their stories and poems to the *InkRoom* website for others to read and comment on, and the best are then published in the *Wacky* magazine each month. Prizes are awarded for winning submissions.

FREE comprehension question sheets are provided with the magazine each month, making it easy for teachers to use the stories.

There are 11 issues each year, with Dec / Jan combined.

I think Michelle is to be highly commended for providing our children with a quality magazine that I can recommend to every Christian school.

TEACH

For more information on this resource go to www.wackymag.com.au *and* www.inkroom.com.au

