

other problems that need you and I to be brave. I do not know anyone who has not got a problem of some kind or another – although some lives have more problems than others.

One of the most important things your families and teachers can do for you is to help you to live your lives with courage. When we met some parents last Thursday, we had to tell them that some of you are little mice in class. You may talk to your friends but when the teacher asks you to answer a question, you are silent. Some of you must learn that is OK to give a wrong answer but it is not OK to give no answer. You must try to answer questions. You must try to think and then speak. Be brave and express what YOU think. This is a skill you need when you study all subjects in school. But it is also a skill you need in life – in all your relationships. It is right for you to have the courage to say what you think, to your parents, to your friends and to your teachers. Then you can have good discussions as you are helping them to understand you.

If you do not speak out, you cannot help your friends when they are tempted. Maybe one of your friends picks up a cigarette or talks about taking drugs or is driving a car dangerously. Are you going to sit there and say nothing? Young people can be a very good influence on each other but they can also be a bad influence on each other. So much depends on which members in the group have the courage to speak out when the others are being stupid. That can mean being very brave as some of your friends may laugh at you at the time, but, later, some of them will be grateful to you that you have stopped them doing something stupid.

When you read about people who have been heroes and heroines, so often, it is because they have been brave. It is right that we should want to be like that also - and so, every morning in school Assembly, we ask God to make us brave.

God bless you.



SCHOOL PRAYER 8. PURE

Assembly 40. Wednesday march 12th 2003

Yesterday, I hope, you saw why we needed to ask God to make us brave and today, I hope, you will see why we need to ask God to make us pure. You may think, “But we are children – we are pure already because we are innocent so that we do not need to bother with purity.” But there is a big difference between innocence and purity which you need to understand.

Little children are innocent because they do not know many things about life. The word ‘innocence’ means not knowing. But as you move up the school, from *there* (Year 2) to *there* (Year 11) you come to know a great deal more about life and how you are made and how people behave and what you could do, if you had the chance, and what you should not do, whether you have the chance or not. So you become much more open to temptation BECAUSE you know. It is at the point when you lose your innocence, that you need to develop purity. When you have to make choices, purity is being able to say NO to bad things. Purity is being able to choose NOT to do what you could do because you now know what you could do. Purity is choosing to live a clean life because you come to know what is dirty.

Sometimes the advertisers use the word ‘pure’ to describe things that you clean the house with. “Why not make YOUR bathroom as pure as snow, with . . . our product.” Pure is also used in Bangladesh to describe the drinking water that people need. We all need to drink pure water and not dirty water so that we are not sick. That is why this school did a lot of research on which drinking water was best for the drinking machines we have here. Many countries, including Bangladesh, has a lot of work to

do on trying to make the water in some of the rivers much purer so that the fish can come back into them. The supplies of blood for the hospitals needs to be checked for purity so that people who have blood transfusions do not risk catching diseases. Dhaka is trying to make its air more pure by banning the 2-stroke baby taxis. We all want purity in the world around us. We all want a nice, clean world.

But we also need to pray for purity in our own lives. Think of purity as being clean in thought, word and deed. I know that many of you do not like it if people use dirty language. It is something that can happen in a group of friends – slowly they start using bad language and one of them needs to say, “Let us stop using dirty language because it could become a habit with us and we could lose nice friends and even good jobs that way.”

In sports too, there is a big clean-up movement. Some sports have become dirty through cheating, through taking drugs, cheating through match-fixing and some spectators behave very badly. I am ashamed to say that British football fans have a very bad reputation, mainly because of all the drinking of alcohol that the fans do. But some fans are now banned at the gates. There is a big clean-up going on in sports – and rightly so. If the world of sports is not kept pure, then sport is no longer fun – or fair.

Play clean! Don't play dirty! That is a good rule for life as well as sport. So we pray to God to make us pure.

God bless you.



SCHOOL PRAYER 9. TRUE

Assembly 41. Thursday march 13th 2003

(Take a ruler and a plumb-line)

We have asked God to make us generous and brave and pure and now we are asking him to make us TRUE.

I think that most of you know the importance of speaking the truth, don't you? This means that you do not tell lies. Speaking the truth is indeed very important. If any of you have known someone who tells lies, you know how difficult it is to be friends with such a person. You can never believe what they say! They say one thing but mean another. They tell you seriously that something is true but later you find out that it isn't true at all. Such people are liars and they are playing games all the time – and we know that we cannot trust them. It is very important for each of us to try to be the sort of person who tells the truth because you cannot trust someone who tells lies.

But BEING a true person is even more important. Another word for 'true' is 'straight'. Do you know what a straight line is? You write the heading for a piece of work and then you take your ruler and make a nice, straight line under it. Well – actually – some of you don't. You try and draw a line under a heading with no ruler and it goes all wobbly! You have no guideline – nothing to keep your hand steady so that it does not go up and down. The opposite of straight is CROOKED. There is a children's rhyme that goes, “There was a crooked man and he had a crooked spouse (that is –wife’) and they all lived together in a little crooked house.” But it is very important not to have a crooked house or it will probably fall down. I wonder how people build a house in which the walls are not crooked but straight.