

Mercy Student Leader Scripts:

5 main points of feminism –

What is it (Feminism) (Lily)

Good morning Mr Ronchetti, Students and staff, thank you so much for the invitation to join you at your assembly this morning at the start of what is an important week. My name is Lily and I am a perfect student at Mercy College. Today I am joined by my year coordinator Mrs D'Arcy, Director of student wellbeing Mrs Murray, school captain Larissa, Vice captain Molly and Prefects Emma and Liberti. This coming Wednesday is International women's day. This day celebrates and recognizes female achievements and progression. When we reflect on the female contribution to society, it is clear to see that women have played a significant role in many aspects of society. For example, many everyday items that we take for granted are available to us due to female innovation, including medical syringes, fire escapes and even life rafts, yet all of those women remain unknown with little recognition given to them. When we first hear the word feminist many associate it with a woman 'man hating', or women trying to prove that they are better than men. But this idea is entirely false, as we believe that there are many of you in this school who are in fact feminists. This is because if you believe in equal rights, equal opportunities and equal pay for both genders. I hate to break it to you but you are a feminist! The word feminist by definition in the Oxford dictionary is "the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes." Today, We are here to break the stigmatism that to lift up women we need to tear down men because that is not what international women's day is about. Rather, International women's day is a day to celebrate female success in everyday life and gain equity for all of society

- Negative perceptions of feminism (Molly)

The main blind spot that most people have with feminism is the word itself, because it seems to inherently suggest a preferential treatment of femininity OVER masculinity, which isn't accurate at all. This is a massive misunderstanding because fighting for women's rights is too often confused with 'man hating', when it is actually a fight for complete fairness and equality for BOTH genders. You've probably come across someone that has assumed that men don't need to be feminists, or they don't have a place at the table because it's a 'women's issue'. This could not be more wrong. Men are essential in the fight for fairness, because equality cannot be achieved if women are the only ones fighting for it. Feminism also extends beyond just women and can lead to positive outcomes for men too, such as destigmatising harmful male stereotypes. And so, men can be feminists too! This can be as simple as being careful with your language, which may contain prejudice and misogyny that is too often normalised. It's important to remember that the statement "I am a feminist" is not a personal attack on men, but a statement against the maintenance of any society being predominantly patriarchal. It is so much larger than an individual person, it is speaking on broader cultural values, traditions, and tolerance. The negative perception that there is blame attached to the word 'feminism' or that it's an attack on men today for what has been done to women in the past, is false. Because feminism, in truth, recognises history, and aims

to work for a better future. To end gender inequality, to achieve political, economic, and social equalities of the sexes, everyone needs to be involved.

- Real Life Example (Larissa)

All around us feminists are evident. From singers such as Harry Styles and John Legend to actors such as Emma Watson and lifelong feminists such as Malala Yousafzai. Feminists shape our world. Affecting how we interact with our loved ones. Most of you must know John Legend; the American singer-songwriter, most famously known for his smashing hit "All of me". He is, not only, an amazing artist, but also a very influential feminist. After the birth of his daughter in 2017, Legend witnessed first hand the major inequality that women face from all ages. He states that "all men should be feminists... because it leads to a better society." This is because through equality, everyone can reach their full potential. Through equality, everyone is given a fair chance. And through equality, comes a better world. Emma Watson. Most notably evident in the remake of Beauty and the Beast, is one of the leading ladies of the feminist movement. She empowers, inspires, and encourages everyone, both boys and girls to fight for change. She notices inequality and speaks out about it. As I was researching in preparation for today, I didn't want to pick a quote which delves deep into Pandora's box, but rather I wanted to leave you all with something very simple to think about. She states "This isn't just, 'girls are better than boys, boys are better than girls.' This is just, 'everyone deserving a fair chance.'" So as you continue to ponder the idea of International Women's Day today and throughout this week, think about equity, because through equity a brighter future for all is ahead. - What is a real women

- Representations of Women (Liberti)

Women are real people. They are your mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunties, friends. They have jobs, ambitions, hearts, goals, dreams, and experiences. I know most of you are aware of this. At its simplest, of course women have thoughts and ideas. But in our modern day media, our favourite tv shows, our favourite movies, our favourite youtube channels, women are still not being represented in the way they deserve. Too often we see stereotypes being pushed onto every female character that makes its way onto our screens. We have the damsels in distress, the dumb airheads, the manic pixie dream girls, the cool girls, the femme fatales, to name a few. All of these may take some aspects of real life people, but in their onscreen presence, they become nothing more than a parody of women, making fun of every single thing they could do or even don't do. Real women do not exist for the entertainment of men, nor are their interests or disinterests something to make fun of. A question I have to pose to you all is this: Name one thing a woman can do that she will not be made fun of. Because no matter what you said, I can speak on behalf of the girls here with me today, that we have been made fun of for it, people have called us names for it, thought us weird, try-hard, wannabes just for something we have taken an interest in. As soon as we try to break away from the stereotypes put on us by the media, we are forced right back into them by society.

- Human Rights are Women's Rights (Emma)

Womens' rights are human rights. 4 billion people across the world are being denied basic human rights that they are entitled to, simply because they are women and girls. Not one country in the world has achieved gender equality, however through feminism we continue to strive for the optimum goal of achieving equality for women and to maintain basic human rights. Discrimination experienced by women means they are faced with fewer opportunities for economic participation, less political representation, a refusal of access to education,

face greater health and safety risks, and are confronted with violence and abuse. Women's rights are human rights. Violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights abuses in Australia and around the world. 1 in 3 Australian women will experience violence in a close relationship, and 1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. This is all preventable. Women's rights are human rights. Australian women are paid 17.5% less than men, for the exact same work. This means that women would have to work an extra 64 days a year to achieve a state of economic equilibrium. Exhibit A, the Indian Premier League Cricket, with the signing of two outstanding Australian all-rounders. The only difference is, male superstar Cameron Green, pocketed \$3.15 million, and female Indigenous sensation, Ash Gardner, earned a ground-breaking \$558,000 - ground-breaking for women at least, but where is the equity?. Women's rights are human rights. Despite progress, women continue to face a multitude of barriers, purely based on their gender, when it comes to education. Women make up $\frac{2}{3}$ of the world's illiterate population - that's approximately 530 million people. That's why this cycle is continuous, and becoming increasingly challenging to disrupt the outcome. Education is the key, but remains a basic human right so many women do not have access to. Women's rights are human rights. This endless cycle can only be broken by feminist intervention, that comes from me, and you, and everyone. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. What are you going to do, to change the narrative for us all?