Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

**TOPIC 2.1: WHAT IS RELIGION LIKE IN AUSTRALIA? 3 WEEKS**

- Lesson 2.1.1 Statistics
- Lesson 2.1.2 Media Attitudes
- Lesson 2.1.3 Emerging Trends

**TOPIC 2.2: HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN?**

- Lesson 2.2.1 Indigenous Spirituality
- Lesson 2.2.2 Arrival of Christianity
- Lesson 2.2.3 Arrival of Other Traditions

**TOPIC 2.3: HOW DOES AUSTRALIAN CULTURE INTERACT WITH RELIGION?**

- Lesson 2.3.1 Ritual and Pilgrimage
- Lesson 2.3.2 WYD & the Dalai Lama
- Lesson 2.3.3 Australianising religion
Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

Topic 2.1: What is religion like in Australia?

Lesson 2.1.1

Statistics

In this lesson students will examine religious diversity in Australia.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Register for Survey Monkey.
- Check with the school librarian or ResourceLink for a copy of the ABC Compass program My Generation: Y God? (30min duration).

For students to examine religious diversity in Australia select from the following activities.

Students:

- brainstorm definitions of religion and spirituality to broaden students’ knowledge of diversity beyond cultural to include religious diversity.
- take a census of the religious affiliations of the students in the class. This could be done using survey monkey so that the data can be analysed and used for informed discussion. For an example of a survey go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/322XQSX or devise the questions to be included in the survey as a class.
- examine the statistics from the 1996 and 2006 census on religious affiliation in Australia and answer the following:
  - Which religions are in decline and which religions are growing?
  - What was the total percentage of people in 2006 who were in the no religion or not stated categories? Propose a reason for this. How could you test your proposal? Discuss alternatives.
  - How do you account for the large percentage increase in the eastern religion category? Check the migration data for more information.
- view the ABC Compass program My Generation: Y God? (30 mins duration). Discuss as a class the attitudes and beliefs presented.
- create a brief response that represents gained understandings of religious diversity in Australia.
Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

Topic 2.1: What is religion like in Australia?

Lesson 2.1.2 Attitudes in the Media

In this lesson students will examine, critique and reflect on the attitudes presented in the Australian media about religion.

Teachers: before you start!

- Familiarise yourself with the Sofia website (link below). Understanding the media representation of religious diversity can assist students with completing the assessment task.
- Familiarise yourself with ToonDoo. This is a digital tool for creating cartoons.

For students to examine and critique attitudes in the Australian media select from the following activities.

Students:

- examine religious news headlines in the Australian media and in groups of four access the Sofia website.
  - Choose a week to examine from the Religion News tab, ensuring each group chooses a different week.
  - Divide the articles about religious news in Australia for a particular week amongst the group members. Read allocated article(s) and record the following information in a common table with headers: Date, Media type and name, Key content, Opinion or Report and Attitude towards religion.
  - Discuss the findings as a class and determine: the most common topics, the most prevalent attitudes.
  - Synthesise and record the most commonly presented attitudes of the Australian press about religion.
  - Use ToonDoo to create a cartoon to represent the synthesised ideas. (Note: Useful for assessment.)
Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

Topic 2.1: What is religion like in Australia?

Lesson 2.1.3

Emerging Trends

In this lesson students will investigate emerging trends in religion and spirituality in contemporary Australia.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Familiarise yourself with the statements about emerging religious trends in Australia.

For students to investigate the emerging trends in matters relating to religion and spirituality select from the following activities.

Students:

- read the following quote and the facts that follow:

  Australian youth are present in Protestant Mega churches (like Hillsong), Catholic Parishes and among Buddhists and other forms of spirituality. It is unlikely that they will commit to a weekly event. Youth are event-oriented and spirituality events attract large numbers. Gary Bouma (2006.)

  200 000, mostly young people, attended the Buddha’s birthday festival in Brisbane in 2005.

  An estimated 400 000 pilgrims attended Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI at Randwick Racecourse in Sydney in 2008.

  20 000 Australians made the pilgrimage to attend the Anzac Dawn Service in Turkey in 2006.

  In 2007 the Brisbane Entertainment Centre filled with 15 000 people to hear the Dalai Lama speak.

  8 000 Australian pilgrims witnessed the canonisation of Mary MacKillop in Rome in 2010.

- Discuss with a partner, whether the statements are enough evidence to support Bouma’s statement? What other evidence might be required?

- reflect upon and discuss with a partner the experience of a recent retreat that you have attended, and identify the elements that, for you, were the most meaningful. For example, being together with your friends, silence, meditation, prayer, affirmation, reconciliation, Mass, etc.

  - With a partner, design the ideal retreat experience for your year level. Determine the purpose, location, length of time and activities. Share ideas with the class.

- predict emerging experiences that will engage and nurture the religious experience and spirituality of Australian young people.
Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fairly?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

Topic 2.2: How did it all begin?

Lesson 2.2.1

Indigenous Spiritualities

In this lesson students will deepen their understanding about the Dreaming stories from different groups of Indigenous Australians.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Consider viewing excerpts of the film Ten Canoes.

For students to further their understanding of Indigenous spiritualities select from the following activities.

Students:

- read the following statement about Indigenous spirituality from the Australian Museum website:

  Spirituality for Indigenous Australians takes many forms. Its forms and practices have been profoundly influenced by the impact of colonialism, both past and present. Some Indigenous Australians share the religious beliefs and values of religions introduced into Australia from other cultures around the world, particularly Europe. But for most people, religious beliefs are derived from a sense of belonging - to the land, to the sea, to other people, to one’s culture. The form and expression of spirituality differs between Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Aboriginal spirituality mainly derives from the stories of the Dreaming, while Torres Strait Islander spirituality draws upon the stories of the Tagai.

  - Find on the website identified above, definitions or descriptions for these words and answer the question that follows: Dreaming, Dreaming Stories, Tracks of Life, Rainbow Serpent, Mimi Spirits, Tagai. Why do you think there is such diversity in Dreaming stories?

- listen to some Dreaming Stories and notice differences and similarities in the stories from different parts of Australia. (Each story is 6–7 mins long.)

- view excerpts from the movie Ten Canoes for an example of a Dreaming Story from the Northern Territory that includes Law, Land, Clan rule and ritual. Explore the key concepts within the film: origins, ritual, law/punishment, family, land, relationships within and beyond the tribe, importance of story, concept of time and patience, stewardship and tradition.

- Investigate the impact of the arrival of Christianity on Indigenous people by trying the Extending Knowledge lesson on Christian Missionaries.
Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

Topic 2.2: How did it all begin?

Lesson 2.2.2 Arrival of Christianity

In this lesson students will investigate the effects of the arrival of Christian religions to the Australian colonies.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Sign up for ToonDoo, a digital tool for creating cartoons
- For access to excellent content material on this topic familiarise yourself with the NSW State Library website.

For students to investigate the arrival of Christianity to the Australian colonies select from the following activities.

Students:

- research the history of Christianity at the NSW state library website by reading first, The Early Years and then, Christian Foundations: Complete one or more of the following.
  - Using ToonDoo create a three frame cartoon to represent the arrival of the various Christian denominations to the Australian colonies.
  - Create a timeline recording the first arrivals of the various Christian denominations including Catholic, Church of England, Lutheran, Presbyterians, Methodists etc.
  - Read Places of worship and answer the following questions: What happened to the first church? Why do you think the convicts were relatively indifferent to church services?
  - View the Gallery of Churches and describe how the construction of the rebuilt St Philips church compares with the other early churches?
- read Catholics in the Colony and Letters from convicts and their families to Father Therry from the above website.
  - Complete a PMI chart regarding the importance of religion to colonial Australians as depicted in the letters.
  - Critique from the perspective of an Anglican, a Catholic, a Jew or an Indigenous person, the attitude and actions of the authorities towards religious freedom in early colonial times, drawing on evidence from the letters and gained understandings from research.
- explore the origin of your own religion in Australia.
Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

Topic 2.2: How did it all begin?

Lesson 2.2.3
Arrival of Other Traditions

In this lesson students will investigate how world religions other than Christianity had their beginnings in Australia.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Familiarise yourself with the websites referred to in the lesson.

For students to understand the beginnings of Australia’s religious diversity you could try these:

Students:

- Investigate the origins of world religions in Australia in groups of four. Each member of the group chooses one world religion from the following list: Buddhism, Judaism, Islam or Hinduism. Reliable content can be accessed from the websites listed below.

  - Access the appropriate website, locate the following information and record on a Retrieval Chart entitled: Origins of World Religions in Australia under the following headings:
    - Name and Denomination/Branch of the religion
    - Numbers, Location, Time and Mode of arrival
    - Religious Leader/s
    - Places of worship
    - Success or Failure (in the first fifty years after arrival).
  - List the places of worship for this religion in your local area today.
  - Present the information in a mode of your choice to the rest of the group, eg PowerPoint, short report, photo story, cartoon etc. Review and evaluate the quality of the website content.
  - Choose the most engaging presentation of your group to present to the whole class.

Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia's Religious Diversity

Topic 2.3: How does Australian culture interact with Religion?

Lesson 2.3.1 Ritual and Pilgrimage

In this lesson students will view several examples of the ways in which contemporary Australians interact with religion.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Familiarise yourself with the visual presentations referred to in the lesson.

For students to experience the ways in which the Australian culture interacts with religion select from the following activities:

- view one or more of the audio visual resources in the box below and answer the questions that follow:

  Andy Irons memorial paddle out featuring Australian surfers Stefanie Gilmore and Mick Fanning.

  Scenes from World Youth Day Sydney 2008 - a celebration of Catholic youth in Australia and consider the photograph above of the construction workers taken whilst walking across the Sydney harbour bridge during the pilgrim walk to Randwick Racecourse.

  Compass program Gallipoli pilgrimage 2006. 50 mins.

  Canonisation of Australia’s first saint Mary MacKillop; or the Channel Ten news clip.

- Identify the ways in which religion and sacred rituals have influenced the design and experiences of significant events important to contemporary Australians. For example, sacred objects such as candles, incense, sacred words, actions, processions or movement, hymns, prayers, responses, silences, formal presider.

- Discuss the following question: Is it possible to define or describe a uniquely Australian spirituality? Use a Retrieval Chart with the following headings: Characteristics, Non-characteristics.
Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

Topic 2.3: How does Australian culture interact with Religion?

Lesson 2.3.2 WYD and the Dalai Lama

In this lesson students will investigate two religious phenomena in Australia, Catholicism, the largest Christian denomination and Buddhism, the fastest growing religion.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Familiarise yourself with the websites and audio visual clips used in this lesson.

For students to investigate the religious phenomena in Australia select from the following activities:

- investigate the phenomenon of World Youth Day in Australia.
  - View the clip of the people of Sydney welcoming Pope Benedict the XVI in 2008.
  - View the You Tube clip of a news report on the closing Mass at WYD or the Ray Martin summary.
  - Share any personal stories or experiences students or staff may have had with World Youth Day. If possible invite someone who has been to a WYD event to share their experiences. Discuss the following: What does the large responses of both religious and non religious Australian people to contemporary religious events such as World Youth Day and the canonization of St Mary MacKillop say about the nature of Australian culture?

- investigate the phenomenon of the increasing number of Buddhists in Australia.
  - Listen to the interview between Kochi and the Dalai Lama on Sunrise in 2009 and record the Dalai Lama’s spiritual advice on the issue of the fast pace of life and materialism in Australia. Investigate for yourself: Who is the Dalai Lama? What is the significance of his role and his person for the adherents of the Buddhist Religion? Name some of the main teachings of Buddhism espoused by the Dalai Lama.
  - Discuss the following in light of the thousands of Australians who participated in events associated with the Dalai Lama and Buddhism in recent times:

    What does the large responses of both religious and non religious Australian people to contemporary religious events such as Buddha’s birthday festivals and talks given by the Dalai Lama say about the nature of Australian culture?
Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 2: Australia’s Religious Diversity

Topic 2.3: How does Australian culture interact with Religion?

Lesson 2.3.3
Australianising Religion

In this lesson students will investigate how religious groups interact with Australian culture.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Familiarise yourself with the Sydney Morning Herald website.
- Finalise the Assessment task ensuring it provides students with opportunities to respond to the fertile question.

For students to increase understanding of the interaction between religion and Australian culture select from the following activities.

Students:

- explore the Sydney Morning Herald special on Islam in Australia.
  - listen to one of the stories of an Australian Muslim.
  - read the first article Islam in Australia - a diverse society finds a new voice.
  - Reflect on the interaction between Australia and Islam by answering this question: What are the positive effects of increasing understanding of religions and cultures different to your own?
- review understandings gained from activities completed from the first two Core Content Areas in light of the fertile question for this unit How does religious diversity advance Australia fair?
- share and clarify understandings about the assessment task and identify content areas for further inquiry.
USEFUL RESOURCES

**Survey Monkey** is an online tool designed to collect and manipulate survey data. It is free and simple to register. An email address is required to register as well as the email addresses of survey participants.

**ToonDoo** is a fun and versatile easy to use free digital cartoon maker. An email is required to register. You can make one, two or three frame cartoons, choose from hundreds of accessories or create your own.

**Hillsong Australia** is a large Protestant mega church with three locations in Australia.

**Ten Canoes** is an Australian film giving viewers the opportunity to engage with Dreaming: law, story, relationships, spirituality, and ritual of the Yolngu people.

**Retrieval Chart Strategy**

A Retrieval Chart is a graphic organiser used for organizing and categorizing data using headings or key concepts. Retrieval Charts are useful for:

- Presenting information in an easily accessible way
- Comparing and contrasting attributes
- Organising data for use in research projects
- Note taking in a systematic way

**You Tube** is an online tool for accessing short audio visual clips.
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