Fertile Question: How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

Core Content Area 1: Australia’s Diversity

Topic 1: Who calls Australia home?

Extending Knowledge: Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Focus

Challenging Attitudes

In this lesson students can examine facts and affirm or challenge their own beliefs about refugees and asylum seekers.

Teachers: Before You Start!

- Determine which resource you will use to present facts about refugees or asylum seekers to students. To do this it is recommended to review those resources written into the unit and under the Useful Resource button.
- Consider locating a guest speaker with a personal story about being a refugee or asylum seeker.

For students to examine facts and attitudes about refugees and asylum seekers, select from the following learning activities:

Students:

- critique personal knowledge and attitudes about refugees and asylum seekers by:
  - completing a KWH around the issue of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia by asking *What do I know? What do I want to know? How do I find out?*
  - view a resource that presents facts about refugees and asylum seekers. Two examples are provided.
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Learners’ Notes:

Both the YouTube clips above are emotive and students are encouraged to use critical literacy skills when viewing. However, the facts in the clips can be verified at [http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/](http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/). For students to examine the language that appears frequently in the media and other settings on this topic, click on HOTWORDS in that website. These words are relevant to multicultural Australia, refugees and asylum seekers.

- write a first draft of a description of an asylum seeker by using this sentence starter: *An asylum seeker is someone who is ... .*
- Critique and redraft the description in light of these questions:
  - Does this description apply to all asylum seekers?
  - Where have the ideas for this description come from?
  - What evidence is there to support this description? Is the evidence reliable?
  - Is this description positive or negative?
  - Compare this description with others. Is it similar? Why or why not?
- create a cartoon based on the final draft of the description. Justify the content and style of the cartoon in a small or whole class group. Consider using Toon Do, a digital tool for cartooning.
Core Content Area 1: Australia’s Diversity

Topic 1: Who calls Australia home?

Extending Knowledge cont: Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Students:

- copy the table to a Word document and cut and paste the contents of the table to align the terms with their correct definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>A person fleeing danger in their home nation who tries to find a place where they will be protected from the threats they fear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum seeker</td>
<td>The detention of any person regardless of age, sex or nationality who is unlawfully in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist</td>
<td>A person who has a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group or political party, who is outside their country, is unable or unwilling to return to their country due to fear of persecution and who is not a war criminal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory detention</td>
<td>A person who engages in the systematic use of violence and intimidation for the purpose of achieving a political, religious, social or economic goal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- review and discuss the following facts:
  “Australia is the only Western country that mandatorily detains asylum seekers whilst their claims are being heard. This includes asylum seekers who may subsequently be granted permanent residence as a refugee. This assessment can take a number of years during which these refugees remain detainees, often in harsh conditions.” www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au.

Australia has been criticised by the outside world for violating the human rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Australia signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

The social teachings of the Catholic Church are based on the dignity of the human person.

All human beings are precious because we are all made and loved by God. So each human being has dignity and deserves to be respected by other human beings. That means that they should be secure and free from the fear of violence and from experiences or social structures that undermine human dignity and development.

(2010 Social Justice Sunday Statement)

- Describe how does this set of facts position a person’s thinking about the way Australia is treating refugees.
- Research factual information about the way Australia is treating refugees that positions different or opposite point of view.
- Discuss the diversity of opinions presented.
Examine the cartoon below and answer the following questions:

How is Australia being represented by the cartoonist?

Is this an accurate or stereotypical representation?

Who do the people in the boat represent?

What attitudes are being challenged by the cartoonist?

Create two new captions to replace those in the existing cartoon that offer an alternative viewpoint.