Fertile Question: How do I know what’s good and evil?

Core Content Area 1: Wisdom through the ages

TOPIC 1.2: Human Freedom and Responsibility

Depthing Understanding: Social Conscience

In this lesson students will explore the nature, and expression of social conscience.

For students to deepen understanding about social conscience select from the following activities:

1. Investigate current situations that are hot topics for discussion in order to explore the nature of the Australian social conscience.
   a. Search online newspapers such as the Courier Mail (Letters to the editor, blogs), social networks and social media sites such as YouTube to determine issues that are generating a significant response.
   i. Categorise these events according to race issues, corruption issues, immigration issues, environmental issues, reproductive and genetic issues, sexuality issues, sporting issues and so on.
   ii. Determine the values and beliefs that appear to underpin responses.
   iii. Report findings about the issues and associated values to contribute to a class discussion about the nature of the Australian social conscience.
   iv. What are the major experiences and values that have and continue to inform an Australian social conscience? (For example: geography, origins, spirituality.)

2. Explore the various ways Australians have expressed their collective indignation and outrage about events throughout history.
   a. List events that have caused a reaction from Australian society in the last 100 years.
      i. Research the Australian War Memorial database on the Vietnam war (1962-1975). Create a class timeline by dividing into 6 teams, with each team responsible for recording the events for two years of the war.
      ii. View the clip Forever Hold Your Peace. What is the clip about? What events in the timeline could have sparked this response? What is the significance of a 17/18 year old speaking out about the issues surrounding this war? What questions did it raise for you?
      iii. Reflect on the importance of public expressions of the Australian social conscience. Could you see yourself speaking at a protest rally? Why? Why not? What would it take to move you to join a protest rally today?
   b. Critique the following hypothetical situation: The Australian government changes the law and introduces conscription again as it was in 1964 to force people to join the military and serve in an overseas conflict.
      i. Predict the consequences and the reaction from the public.
      ii. Create a Twitter style response of 140 characters or less to the Prime Minister expressing your opinion.