Fertile Question: How does world peace begin with me?

Core Content Area 1: A culture of peace and non-violence

TOPIC 1.3: Challenging the thinking

Depthing Understanding: Protest songs and the anti-war movement

In this lesson students will explore the genre of protest songs as a part of the anti-war movement.

Teachers: Before You Start!

1. Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.

For students to explore the genre of protest songs, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the power of song as part of a movement for social change.
   a. Investigate the use of protest songs as a tool for social change.
      i. Listen to the song Beds are burning by Midnight Oil by way of introduction to this lesson. What is the song about? How do the images assist you to understand what the song is about? What is a protest song? What value do music and songs have as a tool for protest?
      ii. Choose a decade from the last fifty years and research the protest music that was recorded in that decade. Find out what injustices were occurring in the world at the time of the song recording. Choose one song from the decade, examine the lyrics carefully and answer the following questions: What are listeners being told in the song? Does the song seem to call for action from a group or the listeners or is it a social comment by the individual who wrote the song to raise awareness or promote action? Share the song with the class.
      iii. View the video of the Michael Franti song Bomb the world. What devices has the artist used in the song to make the meaning of the song clear? How do the images chosen by the video maker enhance the value of the song as a tool for protest?
      iv. View the video of Voices that challenge by David Haas. The sociologist R. Serge Denisoff wrote that the Psalms of Judaism and Christianity were the earliest protest songs (albeit as a form of propaganda). How might the use of "protest" songs like Voices that challenge in religious ceremonies affect believers?
      v. Create a video version for one verse of one of the following contemporary Christian songs to enhance the impact of the lyrics and to evoke a response from the viewer: The generous Mr Lovewell by Mercyme, What do we know by Thousand Foot Krutch, or Looking for Angels by Skillet.
Dbking, May, 1, 2007, via Flickr Creative Commons Attribution.