Fertile Question: What does it mean to be a religious citizen in a multi-faith world?

Core Content Area 1: Rethinking citizenship

TOPIC 1.3: Exploring the concept of religious citizenship

Extending Knowledge: Religious ethics and Australian politics

In this lesson students will investigate some of the difficulties in separating completely Church and State.

LESSON

Teachers: Before You Start!

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

For students to investigate some of the difficulties separating completely Church and State, complete the following activities:

1. Should religious groups be exempt from anti-discrimination laws?


   What is the main issue under discussion in the article?

   List the voices that are expressed in the article using a table such as the one below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice in the article</th>
<th>Words reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jim Wallace, Australian Christian Lobby Director</td>
<td>“She (Julia Gillard) has no intention of restricting freedom of religion”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He was “not aware of any church…” etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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   Discuss as a class the question: Would it be a violation of religious freedom if the Australian government made it against the law for religious organisations to exclude from their workforce, people whose “lifestyles offended (their) religious beliefs”?

   Reflect on the following: Is it really possible for secular countries, particularly in multi-faith and multi-cultural societies like Australia, to legislate or govern without considering religious positions?

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