The significance of festivals

Learning about world views and religions

Intercultural Capability, Years 9 and 10

Sample unit of work

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Overview

Introduction

This sample unit of work should be located within a broader unit of work on cultural practices and diversity. The three sample lessons focus on some of the cultural practices and stories of particular religious and secular world views that contribute to the diversity of Australian society. The lessons are concerned only with the teaching and assessment of this focus; lessons for the broader unit on cultural practices and diversity are not included.

Religions and secular world views are integral to society: they contribute to social cohesion, to the development of new communities, and to the development and consolidation of ethical principles and moral values. The three sample lessons foster student understanding and appreciation of the world views of others. This understanding is developed through exploring practices involved with particular festivals, their special food and their formative folklore, and exploring the connection of intercultural experiences to democratic values. The lessons support insightful student evaluation of the relationship between democratic values and experiences of interculturalism, and critical analysis of the challenges and benefits of living in an interconnected and culturally diverse world.

What students will learn

Students will learn about:

* public events that involve diverse religions and secular world views and cultures interacting (interculturalism)
* how these particular events can be experiences of the democratic values of Australian society
* challenges and benefits of accommodating for a range of festivals in pluralistic societies.

Students begin by considering how the purpose and meaning of selected festivals is underpinned by a particular religion or secular world view. They consider how these festivals create opportunities for the development of interculturalism in Australian society. They then explore the relationship between the intercultural nature of these festivals and the democratic values of Australian society. Students apply their understanding of this relationship to consider the challenges and benefits of accommodating a range of festivals in the context of the needs of society.

Links to the Victorian Curriculum F–10

This sample unit of work is not intended to teach the whole of any content description nor fully prepare students to meet an achievement standard. Rather this unit of work:

* contributes towards teaching a range of content descriptions (as described below)
* supports students to demonstrate their learning (as described in the relevant extracts from the achievement standard, below).

The unit of work utilises the Victorian Curriculum F–10 document [Learning about world views and religions key premises](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf).

**Curriculum area:**  Intercultural Capability

**Curriculum band:**  9 and 10

**Content descriptions:**

Cultural Practices

* Analyse the ways in which intercultural relationships and experiences have contributed to the development of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, and how they are manifested in various contexts([VCICCB018](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/intercultural-capability/curriculum/f-10#level=9-10&search=0c47eb7e-2cbf-4c55-add9-843a80d28844)) (Lesson 1 and Lesson 2)

Cultural Diversity

* Identify and analyse the challenges and benefits of living and working in an interconnected and culturally diverse world ([VCICCD019](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/intercultural-capability/curriculum/f-10#level=9-10&search=980f7148-95d9-4883-a7c4-8176978e0c06)) (Lesson 3)

**Achievement standard (extracts):**

By the end of Level 10 students critically analyse the complex and dynamic relationship between and within cultures and the challenges and benefits of living in an interconnected and culturally diverse world.

They evaluate how intercultural relationships and experiences influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in different contexts.

Structure

This sample unit of work contains five key elements:

* focus questions for each lesson
* guiding information for each lesson, outlining knowledge students will be explicitly taught and other information for teachers
* suggested learning activities for students, including worksheets (see the appendices)
* suggested assessment, for formative or summative purposes
* a list of resources for teachers and students.

Teacher notes

Teachers will determine the duration of these lessons, what prior student learning is necessary, the pedagogical methods and the resources used to teach the unit.

Duration

There is no prescribed time for the unit of work. Teachers will determine the duration through the time they devote to specific teaching points and the associated learning activities and assessment. A suggested duration is 3 × 50 minute lessons.

Pedagogy

The lesson content provides suggested teaching and learning activities, assessment tasks and resources to use – and the pedagogy in these lessons reflects the time allocation of 3 × 50-minute lessons – but teachers will make pedagogical choices about how students can best be engaged in the content learning. These pedagogical choices will be about individual, group or paired work, research and the use of student-generated or teacher-derived research questions, use of resources, guided reading, scaffolded inquiry using questions, teacher-directed learning, the degree of teacher control over content and assessment tasks compared to the degree of student choice, and the use of extension learning activities for interested students and those needing further challenges. The pedagogy illustrated in these lessons reflects the time allocation.

Prior learning

Teachers will determine what background learning would prepare students for undertaking these lessons. Any prior learning should be drawn from relevant Victorian Curriculum F–10 curriculum areas. For example, students could develop understanding of the following Victorian Curriculum content prior to these lessons:

* Discuss challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society (Civics and Citizenship [VCCCC036](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/civics-and-citizenship/curriculum/f-10#level=9-10&search=6a0f78d2-258c-4e8d-b806-130702cb36c8))
* Identify how values can promote cohesion within Australian society, including the values of freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a ‘fair go’ (Civics and Citizenship [VCCCC025](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/civics-and-citizenship/curriculum/f-10#level=7-8&search=bedfdf27-166b-47b8-9b95-aa44e77f6b50))
* Explain how groups express their identities, including religious and cultural identity, and how this expression can influence their perceptions of others and others’ perception of them (Civics and Citizenship [VCCCC026](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/civics-and-citizenship/curriculum/f-10#level=7-8&search=13d66409-a710-4ef4-b339-71b124a38122))
* Analyse the components of a cohesive society, and the challenges, benefits and consequences of maintaining or failing to maintain that cohesion (Intercultural Capability [VCICCD020](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/intercultural-capability/curriculum/f-10#level=9-10&search=c6227dba-4eee-4025-95f8-3e83abf978ab))

Resources

Teachers will decide which resources from the included list they want to use, and they could also use resources not listed here. Some of the resources on the list are web-based. Some sample teacher-written resources such as worksheets have been included in this document, but these resources should not be considered a kit or a package of pre-digested resources. Teachers have the flexibility to adapt these resources to student needs and to link to multiple world views and perspectives related to the context and the content descriptions.

List of resources

General

[Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf), Victorian Curriculum F–10 document

Lesson resources

Lessons 1 and 2

Activity 1 and Activity 2:

* Meet your Muslim neighbours ([Appendix 1](#Appendix1))
* Meet your Buddhist neighbours ([Appendix 2](#Appendix2))
* Meet your Christian neighbours ([Appendix 3](#Appendix3))
* Meet your Hindu neighbours ([Appendix 4](#Appendix4))
* Meet your Jewish neighbours ([Appendix 5](#Appendix5))
* Meet your secular neighbours ([Appendix 6](#Appendix6))

Sources for Hinduism

<https://iskconeducationalservices.org/HoH/practice/401.htm>

Sources for Buddhism

<http://www.chinesenewyearfestival.org/culture/19-the-story-of-chinese-new-year->

<http://www.sbs.com.au/topics/life/culture/article/2017/01/24/how-chinese-australians-will-celebrate-lunar-new-year>

Sources for Islam

<https://www.al-islam.org/fast-sayyid-saeed-akhtar-rizvi/eid-ul-fitr-unique-festival-time-joy-muslims>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/explainer/what-ramadan-and-eid-al-fitr>

[https://www.islamreligion.com](https://www.islamreligion.com/articles/5214/forgiveness-of-sins/)

<https://www.islamicity.org/>

<https://www.islamweb.net/en/>

Sources for Christianity

<http://www.religionfacts.com/christmas>

Sources for Judaism

<http://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/article_cdo/aid/102911/jewish/What-Is-Hanukkah.htm>

<https://reformjudaism.org/hanukkah-customs-and-rituals>

Sources for Secularism

<http://theconversation.com/its-darwin-day-a-celebration-of-science-and-reason-23084>

<https://humanist.org.au/what-is-humanism>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uk7gKixqVNU&feature=youtu.be>

[https://vichumanist.org.au/practical-humanism/darwin-great-scientist/](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvichumanist.org.au%2Fpractical-humanism%2Fdarwin-great-scientist%2F&data=02%7C01%7CBrown.Leonie.J%40edumail.vic.gov.au%7C47ed4600b8a04fc141dd08d6cd073706%7Cd96cb3371a8744cfb69b3cec334a4c1f%7C0%7C1%7C636921828232492682&sdata=a4XZJHvi%2FniA9oKHsQsofaLv8ITtBMiaKxpm82kpuco%3D&reserved=0)

Lesson 3

* Assessment task, Australian Interculturalism
* Instructions and questions; Venn diagram worksheet attached

Further information for the teacher

* For discussion stimulus, watch *BabaKiueria* (Barbecue Area; 1986), which explores some of the unconscious prejudices in intercultural relationships. It is an Australian-made mockumentary (29 minutes) that uses satire to show the relations between Aboriginal Australians and Australians of European descent. It is available on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqcFg4z6EYY), or as a DVD, and an online study guide and other resources are available.
* To explore interculturalism on a global scale, watch [The Heart of Faith: The Parliament of the World’s Religions](https://www.youtube.com/user/parliamentofreligion) (4:30 minutes).
* [Interculturalism: how diverse societies can do better than passive tolerance](https://theconversation.com/interculturalism-how-diverse-societies-can-do-better-than-passive-tolerance-72874) (The Conversation, 2017) covers many of the diverse opinions on interculturalism.

Lessons

Lessons 1 and 2

Focus questions

* What is ‘interculturalism’ and what does it look like in Australian society?
* What are some occasions when different religions and secular world views and their related cultures interact in Australian society?
* What are some special foods associated with these particular festivals or special days?
* Which aspects of the religion or secular world view provide the meaning for the special food and the festival?

Guiding information

Students should refer to the information in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document). There is also further background information on the activity sheets.

During these three lessons students will be introduced to the concept of interculturalism. Interculturalism holds that each religion and secular world view has equal validity, and it encourages participation in diverse religious and secular public events such as festivals. Discussions around interculturalism should encourage attitudes and behaviour that are deeply respectful in the acceptance of the intrinsic worth of different religions and secular world views.

Special foods are part of religious and secular world view festivals because these foods are related to the origin stories of the people, to significant events in their history, and/or to their geographical location.

Learning activities

Over Lessons 1 and 2 students engage with the six religious and secular world views identified in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document). This could be managed by either:

* completing activities in groups of three students, so that in Lesson 1 each group covers the first three religions or world views, either together or with each student taking responsibility for one of the religions or world views, and in Lesson 2 the group then covers the next three religions or world views. The groups would then have six religions or world views to draw on for the assessment task in Lesson 3
* completing activities in groups of three, with each group covering one of the three religions or world views. The same would happen in Lesson 2 with the next three religions or world views. In Lesson 3 the groups could be mixed (possibly made larger) so that each group has the six religions or world views to draw on for the assessment task.

Activity

In Lesson 1, with guidance from the teacher, students develop a concept map of interculturalism. They then complete a number of activity sheets to develop understanding of a particular cultural festival and its religious or secular world view context.

Students then complete activity sheets on different religions or world views in Lesson 2.

The six activity worksheets can be found in the appendices:

* Meet your Muslim neighbours ([Appendix 1](#Appendix1))
* Meet your Buddhist neighbours ([Appendix 2](#Appendix2))
* Meet your Christian neighbours([Appendix 3](#Appendix3))
* Meet your Hindu neighbours ([Appendix 4](#Appendix4))
* Meet your Jewish neighbours ([Appendix 5](#Appendix5))
* Meet your secular neighbours ([Appendix 6](#Appendix6)).

The following two questions are on each of the activity sheets:

1. Which new terms and concepts have you found in this resource? What do they mean?
2. To what extent does this festival achieve interculturalism?

Each activity sheet also has additional questions for consideration.

Assessment

An assessment task will be done in Lesson 3, using the information provided and further research from Lessons 1 and 2.

Lesson 3

Focus questions

* What are overlaps between different religions and world views?
* What are the challenges and benefits of interculturalism?

Guiding information

During Lesson 1 and Lesson 2, students undertook research on the religious and secular world views in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document).

For Lesson 3, divide the class into six small groups and allocate one of the religions or world views to each group. Groups complete the Australian Interculturalism Diagram ([Appendix 7](#Appendix7)) for their designated religion or world view.

The Interculturalism Diagram sheet will need to be printed as an A3 sheet.

This task is followed by questions for group and class discussion.

Learning activity

Assessment task

Get students to form six small groups.

Allocate one of the world views to each group.

Each group needs to complete the Australian Interculturalism Diagram ([Appendix 7](#Appendix7)) for their designated religion or world view by referring to the information from Lessons 1 and 2, and [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document). Supplementary research may be required.

After completion of the task, groups could share information, questions and insights gained. They could consider the areas of overlap and the areas of distinctiveness of the six religious and secular world views.

For discussion:

* What might be the challenges and benefits for individuals of experiencing the public events of a particular religion or world view?
* How does the opportunity for and experience of interculturalism reflect and strengthen particular democratic values?
* What are the challenges and benefits for small business owners in closing their businesses, or conversely remaining open, for special festival periods or on particular days in their religion or world view that are not covered by public holidays?
* What criteria would you have for establishing a public holiday for Australia? Explain why you chose these criteria.

Assessment

By the end of Level 10, students critically analyse the complex and dynamic interrelationship between and within cultures and the challenges and benefits of living in an interconnected and culturally diverse world. They evaluate how intercultural relationships and experiences influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in different contexts.

Assessment should refer to the learning from the assessment task and the completed worksheets from Lessons 1 and 2.

Appendix 1

Activity, Meet your Muslim neighbours

Background

Islam is a major world religion set forth by the prophet Muhammad in the 7th century CE.

Allah (Arabic for the one God) is the Creator of the universe and is separate from creation. God has sent prophets and messengers throughout time with guidance for humanity; with Muhammad the final prophet and messenger.

The Qur’an is the sacred text of Islam which Muslims believe to be the literal word of God (revelation) and His final revelation to humanity. The life of Muhammad is considered the best example of how to live according to the Qur’an.

Muslims perform a number of rituals including five daily prayers, obligatory charity (zakat), fasting the month of Ramadan and performing the Hajj pilgrimage once in lifetime. Muslims are encouraged to develop a direct and personal relationship with God without any intermediaries.

For more information students should refer to the information in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document).

Festival: Eid ul-Fitr – Feast of Breaking the Fast of Ramadan

This festival, usually known as just Eid, takes place from the first day of the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. This means that the date shifts through the seasons from year to year on the solar calendar. Eid ul-Fitr is the most important festival in the Islamic calendar. It not only provides an occasion for Muslims to thank Allah and remember His blessings; it is also a time of spiritual stocktaking to reflect on one’s strengths and weaknesses. The ritual of eating certain foods at these times reinforces Muslim beliefs, ethics and history in a family and communal setting.

While Eid ul-Fitr is a national holiday in Muslim countries, Muslims in Australia do not have a gazetted public holiday but they may, for example, not open their business or attend school so as to celebrate this important event in their festive calendar. Muslims will visit their mosque in the morning to pray and greet each other, then celebrate by visiting friends and relatives, hosting food parties and sharing sweets. The festival celebrates happiness and fulfilment, achieved from sacrificing something for Allah. It is a transition from a month of self-discipline (Ramadan), which contributes to a sense of wellbeing, togetherness and peace. As this is a time of forgiveness and of giving thanks to Allah for helping people to complete their spiritual fasting, many Muslims display their thanks by giving *zakat* (donations to charity and food to the needy).

Food

On Eid ul-Fitr elaborate family feasts are a major element of the celebration. There is no set menu and it is celebrated differently by Muslim communities around the world. The diversity of Islamic cultures can be seen in the variety of dishes served in Muslim homes. Sweets such as Iraqi [*klaicha*](http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/database/klaichadatefilledpas_72976.shtml) (rosewater-scented, date-filled pastry) and Lebanese/Syrian *mamoul* (biscuits filled with dates or ground walnuts) are eaten, while Palestinian Muslims enjoy *ghraybeh* (a butter cookie with almonds or pine nuts) and Indonesian Muslims eat *lapis legit* (a rich layered spice cake). Children are often given little gifts and sweet Turkish delight when they visit family and neighbours.

The most important custom is to share their generous hospitality with family and friends. Many Australian Islamic communities invite non-Muslim guests and dignitaries from the wider community to join them in this time of feasting. Food and festivals are important ways Muslims retain their cultural links to their religious tradition in a multicultural society such as Australia.

Folklore

On Eid ul-Fitr (and on other festivals) a dish called *cig kofte* is enjoyed. It is prepared using raw minced meat with hot spices and barley. The ingredients are hand-kneaded over long periods of time until ready. It is said that the history of this dish goes back to the era of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). The Prophet had destroyed some idols that were worshipped by his people, including his father (Azar). His father ordered that Abraham be thrown into a blazing fire. Legend has it that to prepare that fire all the wood in the land was collected and heaped into a huge mountain. There was hardly any wood left for cooking, so the older women came up with the idea of kneading raw meat with spices till ready.

Questions for consideration

1. Which new terms and concepts have you found in this resource? What do they mean?
2. To which points of the folklore of the religion does the food relate?
3. How does the festival of Eid ul-Fitr reflect the key premises of Islam?
4. To what extent does this festival achieve interculturalism?

Appendix 2

Activity, Meet your Buddhist neighbours

Background

Buddhism began in India (modern-day Nepal) in the sixth century BCE, with the life of Prince Siddhartha Gautama who, upon achieving enlightenment (release from suffering and the cycle of rebirth) became known as the Buddha. Buddhism made its way from India to China over centuries.

It is difficult to generalise about the nature of some festivals, food, symbols and folklore associated with a world view such as Buddhism as there are a number of variants (for example, Mahayana, Theravada and Vajrayana). One element unifying the variants of the world view of Buddhism is that eating should not incur Karmic debt (that is, wrong actions that accumulate over a lifetime to be worked off in the next lifetime); therefore, Buddhists do not kill the entire plant when harvesting root vegetables.

Students should also refer to the information in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document).

Festival: Vesak

Vesak is also known as Buddha Jayanti, Buddha Purnima and Buddha Day. It is a celebration of Gautama Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and death.

Vesak day is traditionally the full moon day in the fifth or sixth lunar month. Buddhists worldwide celebrate it in various ways such as hoisting the Buddhist flag to honour the triple gem: the Buddha, the Dharma (Buddha’s teaching) and the Sangha (the monastics); offerings of flowers and incense; bathing the baby Buddha; Dharma talks and chants by monks and nuns.

In 1999, the United Nations formally recognised the Day of Vesak, acknowledging the contributions of Buddhism towards world peace and respect for people of other faiths, as the Buddha had taught.

Food: *Luohan Jai* – Buddha’s delight

Since ancient times it has been a traditional practice for adherents of Buddhism to observe vegetarianism for the first five days of the New Year in order to purify their physical selves for the year ahead. There is a traditional list of ten ingredients for Buddha’s delight, although some elaborations include 35 or more ingredients.

Food and festivals are important ways Buddhists retain their cultural links to their religious tradition in a multicultural society such as Australia.

Folklore: *Nian Gao* – Chinese New Year Cake

In folklore there is a demon called Nian. On the first day of the Lunar New Year, Nian would wake from his slumber, leave his home in the mountains and descend on the fields belonging to villages. Rice, animals and even children who were outside their homes were consumed, or disappeared.

In fear, the villagers hammered boards across their windows and barred doors to protect themselves and their families. One day, before the coming of Nian, an old man was passing through the village. Upon hearing the story, he queried why the villagers never confronted Nian, as there were more of them – surely they could overpower Nian. But the old man could not convince them, so he said he would confront Nian.

The night of Nian’s coming did not happen because the old man (who was really a God) banished Nian until dawn. He did so for many nights and Nian was very hungry.

The old man told the villagers that he was needed elsewhere and could not confront Nian forever. The villagers asked what they could do if Nian came again.

The old man said that the villagers should frighten Nian by:

* hanging red banners and signs everywhere
* making loud music with drumming
* lighting fireworks
* disguising their children with masks.

The villagers did so and Nian never returned, hence the name for Lunar New Year is *Guo Nian* – Nian has been vanquished or he has passed over.

The old man’s advice of how to dispel evil or bad luck is still heeded in celebrations around the world and in places in Australia in which Chinese people established themselves, such as Chinatown (in capital cities) and Bendigo. The festival has played a role historically in affirming the unique identity of the Australian Chinese community (approaching 1.2 million people, Australian Census 2016) while simultaneously welcoming non-Chinese Australians to attend and participate. Some of the dragon and lion dances are spectacular highlights of the modern celebration.

Questions for consideration

1. Which new terms and concepts have you found in this resource? What do they mean?
2. Which points of the folklore of the world view do the food and symbols relate to?
3. How do the dietary restrictions reflect the key premises of Buddhism?
4. What role has the festival played in Australia?
5. To what extent does this festival achieve interculturalism?

Appendix 3

Activity, Meet your Christian neighbours

Background

Christmas is celebrated annually on the fixed date of 25 December. It is a festival with special meaning for those of the Christian religion. It commemorates the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, whom Christians call Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Christians believe that God the Father sent Jesus, the son, to redeem humanity, that is, to bring humanity back to God and into right relationship with God. They believe this is a relationship of love between the Creator and creatures made in the image of God. Therefore, Christians hold that humans are intended to be loving and creative and have been given the responsibility for the nurture and care of all creation. So for many Christians, Christmas Day is a reminder of the great gift given to them by God and of their duty towards others.

The story of Christmas has its origins in the writings of two 1st century CE authors called Matthew and Luke. Today the story of Christmas is often a combination of these two original stories and many other stories that over the centuries have been added to the story of Jesus’ birth, such as the story of St Nicholas, who has devolved into Santa Claus. What the stories of St Nicholas and Santa Claus have in common is that they are about a person who is a gift giver and whose most important gifts are peace, togetherness and happiness.

Students should also refer to the information in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document).

Festival: Christmas Day

Many Christians participate in a religious ceremony on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning. Even if the religious service is not part of their Christmas observance, most Christians celebrate Christmas Day with gatherings of family and friends, around gift giving and a special meal. Over the centuries many symbols (general and religious) have become associated with the celebrations of this day, such as a tree, glittery decorations for the tree and the house (both inside and outside), a crib, gifts and bonbons. Special colours such as red, green, gold, silver and white are associated with Christmas. The festivities of the day, without any religious features or meaning, have become widespread in the Australian community, even with adherents of other religious traditions.

Food

Although Christianity originated in the city of Jerusalem (in present-day Israel), the tradition of food associated with the festival in Australia has its origins in Europe, where 25 December is in winter. So the traditional festival food has been hot roasted meats and vegetables, hot sweet plum pudding and rich brandy sauce for the main celebration of Christmas lunch or dinner, and many different sweet cakes and biscuits are enjoyed during the days building up to Christmas. Food and festivals are important ways Christians from diverse cultures retain their cultural links to their religious tradition in a multicultural society such as Australia.

Folklore

The tradition of the Christmas pudding originated in the 14th century in the form of a fasting meal in preparation for Christmas. Many years later the idea of the pudding gradually changed into a plum pudding and it became a customary dessert. Around 1700 King George I of Great Britain, having tasted and enjoyed the pudding, established it as part of the Christmas meal. By the 1800s the puddings evolved into what we know as steamed plum pudding today.

One of the folklore stories for puddings is that the pudding should be made with thirteen ingredients, to represent Jesus and His twelve Disciples, and that every member of the family – including relatives and workers in the home – should take turns to stir the pudding with a wooden spoon from east to west, in honour of the Wise Men (three men who came to Jerusalem to pay homage to the newborn Jesus).

The traditional ingredients were raisins, currants, brown sugar, breadcrumbs, lemon peel, orange peel, flour, spices, eggs, milk, brandy, suet (an animal fat) and lemon juice.

Christmas puddings are decorated with sprigs of holly, and this custom symbolises the crown of thorns that Jesus wore when He was crucified. The brandy used for the pudding represents the power of resurrection, and the lemon and citric acid represents the vinegar that Jesus was given when he asked for water.

Questions for consideration

1. Which new terms and concepts have you found in this resource? What do they mean?
2. To which points of the folklore of the religion do the food and symbols relate?
3. How does this festival of Christmas reflect the key premises of Christianity?
4. To what extent does this festival achieve interculturalism?

Appendix 4

Activity, Meet your Hindu neighbours

Background

The world view of Hinduism, prominent in India, is widely practised throughout the world. Scholarly attempts to describe it are limited by varying interpretations of the Gods and their avatars (incarnations). Although there are many Gods in Hinduism, all matter and souls are believed to be part of one final essence, called Brahman.

Students should also refer to the information in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document).

Festival: Diwali

Hindus celebrate Diwali (also called Dipavali) on the fifteenthday of the Hindu month of Kartika, which varies each year on the Gregorian calendar. It occurs at the end of the monsoonal rains when weather has calmed. This festival marks when people:

* celebrate for a fortnight, including certain days that have special meanings such as honouring sisters in special meals with their brothers on the fifth day of the festival
* have a public holiday (India) and large street festivals
* organise *melas* (large markets) across India and elsewhere, such as street festivals in Australia
* carry the statues of the Goddess Lakshmi down streets on certain days and people form guards of honour; she is also brought into homes to usher in prosperity
* light fireworks
* place lamps on boats to light waterways
* burn demon effigies in bonfires
* wear their best clothes
* may decorate their hands with elaborate henna-painted designs (women and girls)
* wear flower garlands and/or build castles and are given gifts (children)
* attempt to clear their debts
* purchase new things for themselves or their houses, for example new clothes, gold items
* light *dipa* (oil lamps, which give the festival its name) and artificial bulbs that decorate homes
* spring-clean and paint designs in white rice flour on their houses.

In Australia Diwali is not a recognised public holiday as it is in India. Regardless, in Australian suburbs where there is a significant Indian population Diwali may be celebrated by street closures. Parts of the celebration may be open to the public. The diverse traditions of celebrating Diwali by adherents from different states of India and the countries of the Hindu subcontinent are honoured.

Food

As this festival is one of happiness and celebration, sweets are eaten. Part of the festival involves children receiving Diwali sweets from booths specially set up for the purpose. Seventeen or more types of sweets are made and eaten across India and elsewhere, including in celebrations in Australia.

Food and festivals are important ways Hindus retain their cultural links to their religious tradition in a multicultural society such as Australia.

Folklore

According to sacred texts and stories, Rama-chandra, who is an avatar of Vishnu, the major Protector God, returned from successfully battling demons and the demon King Ravana. The *dipa* lamps are intended to light the way for Rama as he returns.

Within the festival period, certain days have specific meanings and different Gods are honoured. This varies according to where Diwali is being celebrated. The festival celebrates the theme of light overcoming darkness.

Questions for consideration

1. How is Diwali celebrated in Australia?
2. What is the theme of this festival? How does this theme reflect the key premises of Hinduism?
3. How is the theme recognised in the associated food and the folklore?
4. Which new terms and concepts have you found in this resource? What do they mean?
5. To what extent does this festival achieve interculturalism?

Appendix 5

Activity, Meet your Jewish neighbours

Background

Judaism dates from around 1800 BCE with the biblical story of the covenant between Abraham and God, which founded an eternal bond of faith and obligation between the Jewish people and God. The notion of divine providence – that everything that occurs in the universe takes place under God's sovereign guidance and control – has sustained the Jewish people through nearly 4000 years of triumphs and devastation.

The first temple in Jerusalem fell at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BCE, and the second temple fell in 70 CE. These two events and the subsequent exiles rendered many *mitzvot* (commandments) no longer applicable, including those concerning the now extinct sacrifices and the abandoned land of Israel itself. The rabbis in the post-biblical period reinterpreted Jewish law through developing *Halacha* (literally, ‘the way to go’) to ensure that the divine revelation and special links to their holy land of Israel were not lost to future generations. The festive seasons and fast days, sacred texts, ethical teachings and dietary laws reflect and reinforce the Jewish belief system and its understanding of divine providence in historical events.

Students should refer to the information in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document).

Festival: Hanukah

One way Jews share their beliefs, stories and culture is through their calendar of festivals and special days. The Jewish festival of Hanukah (or variations of this spelling; pronounced *hun-oo-kah*) often falls around Christmas time, in the Jewish lunar month of Kislev, but it has its own special history and meaning. Hanukah (literally ‘dedication’) celebrates the victory in ancient Judea (the Greco-Roman name for Israel) by the Jewish family the Maccabees and their followers over their foreign rulers in the second century BCE. This festival is seen not only as a celebration of the resumption of Jewish spiritual and political independence in ancient Israel, but also as a warning of the dangers of Jewish assimilation into the wider culture to a point where their world view would be totally lost if not strongly defended.

The festival of Hanukah is celebrated for eight days, during which a special nine-branched candelabrum *(hanuki’ah*, pronounced *hu-noo-kee-ah*) is progressively lit over the eight nights using the *shamash* (servant), or ninth candle, to kindle them in turn, until on the eighth night all the candles are lit. Jewish homes and shops may proudly display their candles in their front window for all to see from the street.

Jews continue to go to work during that time (except on the Sabbath). Special songs are sung by children and adults to recall the events of this period. Small gifts may be given to children but this is not an important part of the festival. The traditional blessings for this festival and many songs, both old and new, recall God’s help in freeing the Jews from persecution by external forces.

Australian Jewish communities celebrate Hanukah not only in the home and synagogue but also in Melbourne’s City Square, with Jewish leaders lighting a candle each night at sunset and musicians providing entertainment for all who come along. In Jewish areas, an evening concert and fair, often with fireworks, may accompany the candle-lighting ceremony in a public park so all may enjoy the festivities.

Food

Eating special foods cooked in oil – such as sweet doughnuts filled with jam, chocolate or other ingredients; *latkes* (pancakes) made from potatoes; and cheese and apple blintzes – all bring the story to life every year, reminding Jews of the story of the miracle of the oil. A wide variety of delicious doughnuts and *latkes* are sold in Jewish bakeries and delicatessens at this time.

Food and festivals are important ways Jews retain their cultural links to their religious tradition in a multicultural society such as Australia,.

Folklore

One story about Hanukah that is recounted in the Talmud (a collection of writings that covers Jewish laws and traditions) is the miracle of the sacred oil. When the Jews reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem from the Syrian Hellenists (200s BCE), they cleared it of the foreign idols that had desecrated the holy space, scrubbed it clean and prepared to dedicate it once again to the God of Israel. One of the sacred vessels in the Holy Temple was the *menorah*, the elaborate seven-branched candelabrum that was lit every day by the High Priest with pure, fresh olive oil of the highest quality. The Maccabees found only enough holy oil to light the *menorah* for a single day but the candelabrum remained alight for eight days.

Questions for consideration

1. Which new terms and concepts have you found in this resource? What do they mean?
2. To which points of the folklore of this religion do the food and symbols relate?
3. How does this festival of Hanukah reflect the key premises of Judaism?
4. To what extent does this festival achieve interculturalism?

Appendix 6

Activity, Meet your secular neighbours

Background

Secularism has a long history in Australia, sometimes informal and sometimes through formal associations. The Australasian Secular Association operated at its own Hall of Science in Melbourne from 1885 to 1891. Secularism was part of the Australian Constitution from its inception in 1901. The Victorian Rationalist Association (formed in 1909, now Rationalist Society of Australia), the Humanist Societies of New South Wales (1960) and Victoria (1961), and the Council of Australian Humanist Societies (1965) are all dedicated to the ideal of achieving fulfilment in this life without imposing their beliefs on others. They promote democratic values, rights and responsibilities and a secular world view, founded on the principles of reason, evidence-based conclusions and the belief that the natural world is all that exists. They argue that answers to the key questions of human existence are to be found in evidence, the application of the scientific method and human reasoning.

Students should also refer to the information in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document).

Special day: International Darwin Day

International Darwin Day is celebrated annually on 12 February around the world, in commemoration of Charles Darwin’s birthday in 1809 and his groundbreaking work, especially *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin set about investigating how new species arise and evolve into new life forms. He inspired people to look for the truth in the natural world and to respect and admire its order, complexity and diversity, and he gave a realistic direction to learning and thinking, not forgetting the environment on which we all depend. His theory of natural selection forms the backbone of all biological and evolutionary research today. It has led to advances in genetics, biology and medicine that have improved the wellbeing of humanity.

To celebrate International Darwin Day universities, schools and Humanist groups variously celebrate his achievements with additional lectures on evolution, presentations, parties and dinners. In Victoria, the Humanist Society joins with other like-minded secular organisations to hold a picnic by the Yarra River, which is open to interested members of the public.

Food: Cosmopolitan

When celebrating International Darwin Day, the Humanist community unite in a common feeling of fellowship, with food creating a focal point around which they discuss philosophy and science, share stories, and laugh at each other’s jokes. The type of food consumed is not important for Humanists and Rationalists, because different people have different tastes. By sharing a variety of foods, Humanists and Rationalists celebrate diversity and tolerance for differing preferences. Where people bring food to share at a local barbecue Humanists and Rationalists encourage and enjoy the gift of giving.

Food and celebration of special days are important ways that people from different cultures who hold a similar world view can retain and share their cultures in a multicultural society such as Australia.

Folklore

There is no particular story or legend associated with Darwin Day. The emphasis is on remembering and honouring the man and his gifts to humanity. The International Darwin Day celebration began as the joining of three initially separate celebrations in the United States. In 1995 Dr Robert Stephens prompted the Humanist Community in Silicon Valley, California, to start an annual Darwin Day celebration. In 1997 Professor Massimo Pigliucci organised the first annual Darwin Day event at the University of Tennessee. In 2000 a third Darwin enthusiast, Amanda Chesworth, joined with Dr Stephens to bring all of the celebrations under one banner in New Mexico.

Questions for consideration

1. Which new terms and concepts have you found in this resource? What do they mean?
2. Why do Humanists celebrate International Darwin Day?
3. What function does food serve in Humanist celebrations?
4. To what extent does this special day achieve interculturalism?

Appendix 7

Assessment task, Australian Interculturalism Diagram

Festival or special day: …………………………………………………………………………………….

**Identify how** and **explain why** this festival or special day has:

**Special meaning**

**Socialising**

**Story/music/song**

**Ceremonies**

**Sharing food**

**Colour/decorations**