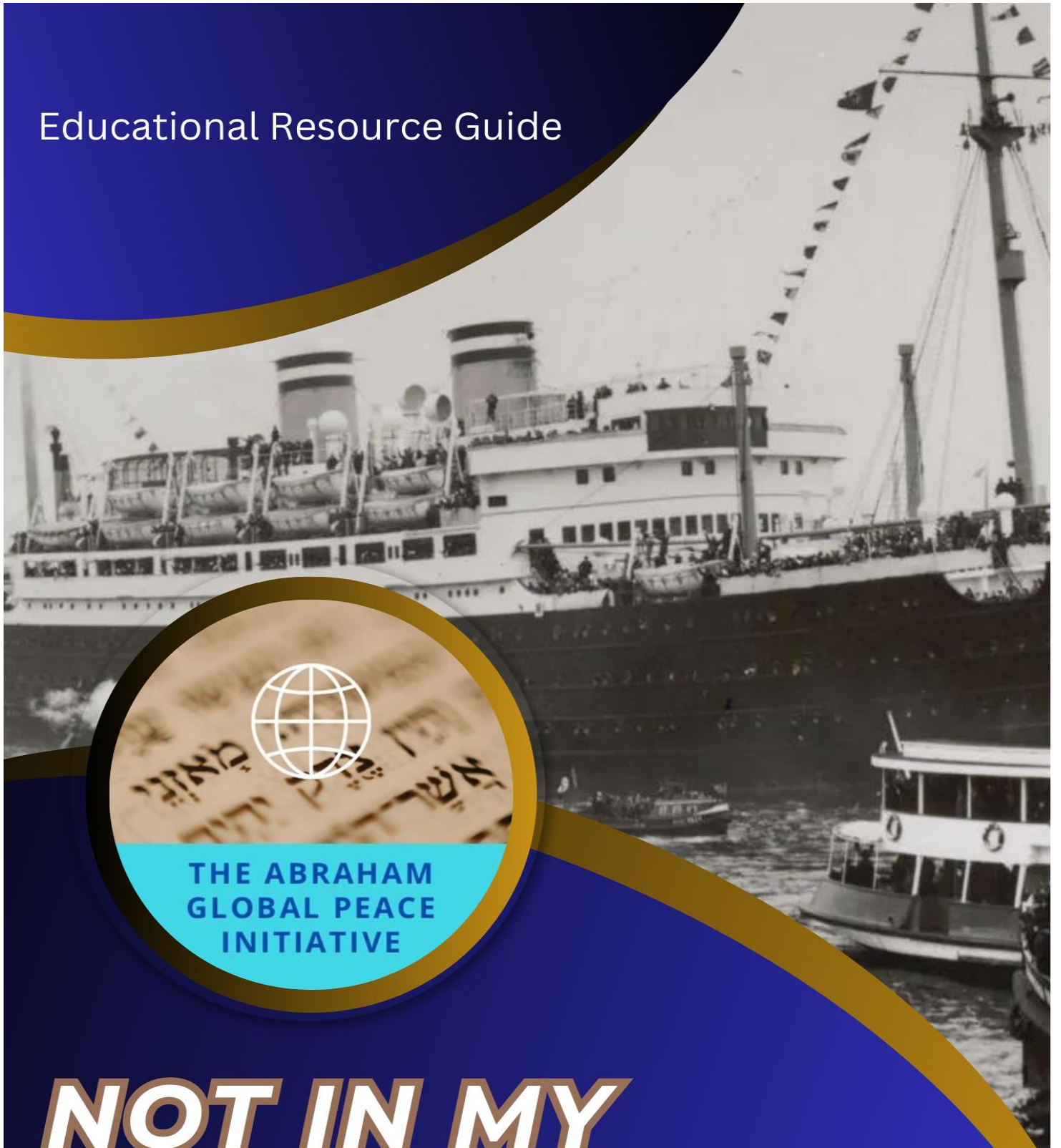


Educational Resource Guide



NOT IN MY NAME

Canadian Immigration, Antisemitism and the
story of the MS St Louis

Not in My Name is an education module for teaching about Antisemitism, the Holocaust and how as a result, Canada has become one of the most friendly immigration countries in the world.

The exhibit addresses historic Antisemitism and its contemporary resurgence; it informs and educates about the Holocaust through the lens of the Jewish refugees; it addresses Canada's historic apology and it brings to the fore a shameful moment that captures issues of complicity, silence and hatred concerning Canada's immigration policies of the time.

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Overview: The MS St Louis

The MS St. Louis story refers to the tragic events surrounding the voyage of the MS St. Louis, a German ocean liner, in 1939. The ship carried over 900 Jewish refugees who were attempting to flee Nazi persecution in Germany. However, due to a combination of political obstacles and international indifference, the passengers of the MS St. Louis were denied entry to various countries, including the United States, Canada, and Cuba.

The voyage of the MS St. Louis began in May 1939 from Hamburg, Germany, and it set sail for Havana, Cuba. The passengers on board were primarily Jewish refugees, many of whom had tried to emigrate from Germany earlier but were unsuccessful. They had obtained visas to enter Cuba and had hoped to use it as a temporary haven until they could find permanent refuge elsewhere.

When the ship arrived in Havana, however, the Cuban government changed its immigration policy, nullifying the passengers' entry visas. Cuban authorities allowed only 28 passengers to disembark, while the remaining passengers were denied entry. The ship was forced to leave Havana harbor on June 2, 1939, with 907 passengers still on board.

Desperate to find a safe haven, the captain of the MS St. Louis, Gustav Schroeder, made attempts to find alternative countries that would accept the refugees. The ship sailed towards the United States, where some passengers had secured visas, but the U.S. government, under the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, refused to allow the ship to dock. The passengers also faced rejection when they reached Canada.

Efforts were made by American Jewish organizations to negotiate with the U.S. government to accept the passengers, but these efforts were unsuccessful. The MS St. Louis was left with no choice but to return to Europe.

The governments of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands agreed to take in the passengers. However, as World War II unfolded, many of the refugees who disembarked in these countries were later subjected to Nazi persecution when Germany occupied these territories.

The tragedy of the MS St. Louis highlighted the failure of the international community to address the plight of Jewish refugees during the Holocaust. It demonstrated the restrictive immigration policies of various countries and the reluctance to offer asylum to those fleeing Nazi persecution. The incident serves as a painful reminder of the consequences of indifference and the human cost of denying refuge to those in need.

Key terms that might be explored in a discussion or study of the MS St. Louis and antisemitism

Exploring key terms can deepen the understanding of the MS St. Louis, its historical context, and the broader issues surrounding antisemitism and refugee policies during World War II.

- **Antisemitism:** Prejudice, discrimination, or hostility directed against Jewish people based on their religion, ethnicity, or heritage. It has a long history and has manifested in various forms throughout different periods.
- **Compassion and Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of others and to show care and concern for their well-being. Compassion and empathy are important qualities in addressing the needs of refugees and combating discrimination.
- **Historical Remembrance:** The act of recognizing and commemorating significant historical events, lessons, and tragedies to ensure that they are not forgotten. Historical remembrance plays a vital role in understanding the impact of past events and preventing similar injustices in the future.
- **Immigration Policies:** Regulations and laws that govern the entry, stay, and settlement of foreign individuals in a country. Immigration policies can be restrictive or inclusive, and they are influenced by a range of factors, including economic, social, and political considerations.
- **Jewish Refugees:** Individuals who fled their home countries due to persecution, particularly during the Holocaust. Jewish refugees faced significant challenges and often sought sanctuary in other countries to escape Nazi persecution.
- **MS St. Louis:** The name of the ship that carried Jewish refugees seeking to escape Nazi persecution during World War II. The ship was denied entry by multiple countries, including Canada, the United States, and Cuba.
- **Refugee Crisis:** A situation characterized by a large number of individuals or groups fleeing their home countries due to persecution, violence, or other forms of severe hardship. During World War II, the world witnessed a significant refugee crisis as many people sought safety from the atrocities of the Nazi regime.
- **World War II:** A global conflict that took place from 1939 to 1945, involving many countries and resulting in the loss of millions of lives. The Holocaust, in which six million Jews were systematically murdered by the Nazis, occurred during this period.

Historical Context

The historical context in which the MS St. Louis incident occurred was the rise of Nazi Germany and the persecution of Jews leading up to World War II. In 1933, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power in Germany. The Nazis implemented discriminatory policies against Jews, stripping them of their rights and subjecting them to increasing persecution.

As the Nazi regime consolidated its power, Jews faced harassment, violence, and widespread discrimination. They were subjected to anti-Semitic laws that restricted their freedoms, confiscated their property, and segregated them from society. Many Jews sought to escape Germany, fearing for their lives and the safety of their families.

During this period, countries around the world were grappling with the effects of the Great Depression and were often hesitant to accept large numbers of refugees. There were also concerns about economic stability, cultural differences, and xenophobia that influenced the immigration policies of many nations.

Additionally, anti-Semitism was prevalent in various countries, with public sentiment often hostile towards Jewish immigrants. These factors created an atmosphere of reluctance to accept Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution.

The voyage of the MS St. Louis occurred in 1939, shortly before the outbreak of World War II. The political climate was tense, and countries were increasingly focused on their own national interests, wary of accepting large numbers of refugees.

The tragedy of the MS St. Louis exposed the challenges faced by Jewish refugees in finding a safe haven during this period. It highlighted the failure of international diplomacy and the lack of coordinated efforts to address the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Nazi Germany. The incident served as a grim precursor to the horrors of the Holocaust, which would claim the lives of millions of Jews and other persecuted groups in the years that followed.

Timeline and Key Events in MS St. Louis and Canadian Immigration Policies

The MS St. Louis was a German ocean liner that gained significant attention in 1939 due to its ill-fated voyage carrying Jewish refugees fleeing from Nazi Germany. Here is a timeline of key events related to the MS St. Louis:

- May 13, 1939: The MS St. Louis set sail from Hamburg, Germany, carrying 937 passengers, mostly Jewish refugees.
- May 27, 1939: The ship arrived in Havana, Cuba, where it was expected that the passengers would disembark and be granted entry. However, Cuban authorities revoked the landing permits, leaving the passengers stranded on board. Desperate for a safe haven, the ship's captain, Gustav Schroeder, attempted to find countries that would accept the refugees.
- June 2, 1939: The ship sailed along the coast of Florida, seeking permission to land in the United States. Despite pleas and appeals to the U.S. government, the passengers were denied entry.
- June 7, 1939: Following denied entry into the United States, the ship then turned north towards Canada. On June 7, the MS St. Louis reached the coast of Canada, where it again sought permission to land its desperate passengers. However, the Canadian government also denied entry.
- June 17, 1939: The MS St. Louis began its journey back to Europe. The ship's passengers and the world watched as their hopes for finding refuge faded away.
- June 20, 1939: The governments of France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, and the Netherlands agreed to accept the passengers and provide them with temporary shelter.
- June 30, 1939: The MS St. Louis arrived in Antwerp, Belgium, and the passengers disembarked. Over the subsequent years, many of them were affected by the events of World War II, with a significant number falling victim to the Holocaust.

Now, let's shift our focus to immigration policies in Canada during that period:

- During the 1930s and 1940s, Canada had restrictive immigration policies in place, which were influenced by factors such as economic conditions, prevailing prejudices, and fears of national security.

- The Canadian government, under Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, implemented the Immigration Act of 1939, which aimed to further restrict immigration to Canada.
- Despite the desperate situation of the MS St. Louis passengers, Canada did not offer them asylum. The Canadian government's immigration policy at the time was highly selective, favoring immigrants who were deemed to have the skills and resources to contribute to the country's economy.
- The incident involving the MS St. Louis raised public awareness about the dire plight of Jewish refugees and put a spotlight on Canada's restrictive immigration policies. The government faced significant criticism for its refusal to provide sanctuary to the ship's passengers.
- In the years following World War II, Canada's immigration policies began to change. The country gradually shifted towards more inclusive policies, particularly with the passing of the Immigration Act of 1952, which emphasized family reunification and non-discrimination.
- Since the MS St. Louis incident, Canada has made efforts to recognize and learn from its past mistakes. In 2018, the Canadian government formally apologized for the country's decision to turn away the MS St. Louis and for its broader immigration policies of that era, acknowledging the immense suffering caused to the passengers and their families.

Key Figures

When examining the MS St. Louis and its historical context, several key figures can be explored. Here are a few significant individuals related to the topic:

1. Captain Gustav Schroeder: The captain of the MS St. Louis, who made efforts to find countries that would accept the Jewish refugees on board.
2. Prime Minister Mackenzie King: The Canadian Prime Minister at the time, who ultimately made the decision to deny entry to the MS St. Louis and its passengers. His government's policies and actions reflect the challenges and complexities of refugee acceptance during that period.
3. Adolf Hitler: The leader of Nazi Germany, whose anti-Semitic ideology and policies directly resulted in the persecution and displacement of millions of Jewish people, including those aboard the MS St. Louis.
4. Franklin D. Roosevelt: The President of the United States during World War II. His administration's response to the MS St. Louis passengers and Jewish refugees in general reflects the complexities of immigration policies and the political challenges of the time.
5. Hannah Arendt: A political theorist and philosopher who extensively studied totalitarianism, totalitarian regimes, and the Holocaust. Her work sheds light on the broader context of antisemitism during that era and the implications for refugees.
6. Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath: A Reform Jewish leader who played a significant role in advocating for the acceptance of Jewish refugees, including those aboard the MS St. Louis. His efforts and activism highlight the importance of raising awareness and taking action against discrimination.
7. Herbert Karliner: A passenger on the MS St. Louis who later settled in the United States. Karliner wrote a memoir, "Haven: The Dramatic Story of 1,000 World War II Refugees and How They Came to America," recounting his experiences on the ship.

Studying the stories of these individuals, along with others on the MS St. Louis, provides a diverse range of experiences and perspectives of Jewish refugees during that time. Their stories offer insights into the challenges they faced, the countries they sought refuge in, and their subsequent lives and contributions.

Introduction questions to ask prior to this to gauge student understanding

To gauge a student's understanding of the topic, you could ask the following introductory questions:

1. Have you heard about the MS St. Louis before? If yes, what do you know about it? If no, what do you think the MS St. Louis might be related to?
2. Are you familiar with the term "antisemitism"? If so, how would you define it? If not, what do you think it might mean?
3. Have you studied or discussed World War II and the Holocaust in your history or social studies classes? If yes, what have you learned about the experiences of Jewish refugees during that time? If no, what do you know or have heard about the treatment of Jewish people during World War II?
4. Can you explain the concept of immigration policies? How do you think these policies can affect the movement of people during times of crisis or persecution?
5. Do you think it is important for countries to provide refuge to those fleeing persecution? Why or why not? Are there any factors that might influence a country's decision to accept or deny refugees?

How has the MS St Louis been a canary in the coal mine for antisemitism in Canada?

The MS St. Louis, a ship carrying Jewish refugees, is often considered a symbol of the challenges faced by Jewish refugees and the issue of antisemitism during World War II. However, it is important to note that the MS St. Louis did not specifically pertain to Canada, but rather involved multiple countries, including Canada, the United States, and Cuba.

In 1939, the MS St. Louis set sail from Germany with over 900 Jewish refugees on board, seeking to escape the persecution and discrimination they faced under the Nazi regime. The ship initially headed for Cuba, where most of the passengers had obtained visas. However, upon arrival, the Cuban government unexpectedly revoked their landing permits, leaving the passengers stranded.

The captain of the MS St. Louis, Gustav Schroeder, then attempted to find other countries willing to accept the refugees. Despite pleas for help from the passengers and international Jewish organizations, several countries, including Canada, turned away the ship. The Canadian government, under Prime Minister Mackenzie King, ultimately refused to allow the refugees to disembark, citing existing immigration policies and concerns over potential economic consequences.

The ship was also denied entry by the United States and several other countries, leading to its eventual return to Europe. The passengers were eventually admitted to the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Tragically, when Germany later occupied Western Europe during the war, some of the passengers who had found temporary refuge were once again subjected to Nazi persecution.

The MS St. Louis serves as a poignant example of how antisemitism and restrictive immigration policies of the time contributed to the plight of Jewish refugees. While Canada's refusal to accept the ship's passengers was consistent with the prevailing sentiment and immigration policies of the era, it has since been viewed as a moral failure and a missed opportunity to provide sanctuary to those fleeing persecution.

In recent years, the MS St. Louis has gained renewed attention as a reminder of the importance of addressing and combating antisemitism and the need for compassion and empathy towards refugees. It serves as a historical lesson and a reminder of the consequences of turning away those in desperate need of protection.

Examples that highlight how the MS St. Louis has been considered a symbol (canary) of antisemitism and the challenges faced by Jewish refugees during World War II

1. Canadian Immigration Policies: Canada had restrictive immigration policies in place during the 1930s and 1940s, which limited the number of Jewish refugees allowed into the country. The Canadian government, under Prime Minister Mackenzie King, turned away

the MS St. Louis and its passengers, despite pleas for help from the passengers and international Jewish organizations. This decision reflected the prevailing sentiment and policies of the time, which were influenced by antisemitism and xenophobia.

2. **International Indifference:** The MS St. Louis sought refuge in multiple countries, including the United States and Cuba, but was denied entry by several nations. This widespread refusal to accept Jewish refugees reflected a broader pattern of indifference and reluctance to help those fleeing persecution. The rejection of the ship's passengers highlighted the global failure to respond effectively to the refugee crisis and combat antisemitism.
3. **Tragic Consequences:** After the MS St. Louis was forced to return to Europe, many of its passengers ended up in countries that would later be occupied by Nazi Germany. Tragically, some of those passengers who had found temporary refuge were once again subjected to persecution, imprisonment, and, in some cases, death in concentration camps. The fate of the MS St. Louis passengers underscores the dire consequences of denying refuge to those escaping antisemitism.
4. **Historical Remembrance:** The MS St. Louis has gained prominence in recent years as a symbol of the challenges faced by Jewish refugees during the Holocaust. Its story has been featured in documentaries, books, and exhibitions, drawing attention to the systemic antisemitism of the time and the need for empathy and compassion towards those seeking sanctuary. The ship serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of discrimination and the importance of learning from history to prevent similar atrocities in the future.

What was meant by “None is Too Many” in Canadian history?

"None is Too Many" is a phrase that is closely associated with Canada's response to Jewish refugees during the Holocaust era. It refers to a statement made by Frederick Blair, who was the Director of Canada's Immigration Branch at the time, during a meeting in 1938 to discuss Jewish refugees.

In response to a question about how many Jewish refugees Canada would be willing to accept, Blair reportedly replied, "None is too many." This statement encapsulated the restrictive and discriminatory immigration policies in place during that period, which made it extremely difficult for Jewish refugees to seek asylum in Canada.

Canada, like many other countries, had implemented immigration policies that limited the entry of Jewish refugees. These policies were influenced by anti-Semitic sentiments, economic concerns, and the prevailing isolationist attitudes of the time. The government, under Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, was reluctant to welcome Jewish refugees and was not proactive in addressing the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Europe.

The "None is Too Many" statement has since become symbolic of Canada's refusal to provide a safe haven for Jewish refugees during the Holocaust. It represents the tragic consequences of discriminatory immigration policies and the human toll of such decisions. It also serves as a reminder of the importance of learning from history and promoting inclusive and compassionate immigration practices.

How the MS St Louis help shape Canada's immigration policy

The MS St. Louis incident played a role in shaping Canada's immigration policy by highlighting the discriminatory practices and restrictive immigration measures that were in place at the time. The ship carried over 900 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution, and they sought asylum in several

countries, including Canada. However, Canada, along with other countries, denied entry to the ship, leaving the passengers stranded and forcing them to return to Europe.

The rejection of the MS St. Louis by Canada and other nations was seen as a missed opportunity to provide refuge to those escaping Nazi persecution. The incident shed light on the barriers faced by Jewish refugees and exposed the discriminatory immigration policies in place at the time. It served as a reminder of the dire consequences of denying entry to those fleeing persecution and the importance of humanitarianism in immigration policy.

The MS St. Louis tragedy and the subsequent public outcry and criticism had a significant impact on public opinion and political discourse surrounding immigration in Canada. The incident raised awareness about the need for more inclusive and compassionate immigration policies. Over time, Canada gradually moved towards a more open and inclusive immigration system, abandoning some of the discriminatory practices of the past.

It is important to note that while the MS St. Louis incident was a significant event, it was not the sole determining factor in shaping Canada's immigration policy. Various social, political, and economic factors, as well as changing attitudes towards immigration, contributed to the evolution of Canada's immigration policies over the years. Nonetheless, the incident served as a catalyst for discussions on the importance of providing refuge and the need for fair and just immigration practices.

Specific Canadian Immigration and Refugee Policies Shaped by the MS St Louis

While the specific immigration and refugee policies in Canada were not directly shaped by the MS St. Louis incident, it played a significant role in raising public awareness and contributing to

the broader discussions on immigration and refugee issues in Canada. The incident highlighted the need for more compassionate and inclusive immigration policies. Here are some subsequent developments that occurred in Canada:

- Immigration Act of 1952: This act, also known as the Immigration Act of 1952, marked a significant shift in Canadian immigration policy. It emphasized family reunification and removed many discriminatory elements that had existed in previous legislation.
- Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) of 2002: The IRPA replaced the Immigration Act of 1976 and aimed to modernize Canada's immigration system. It focused on maintaining the integrity of the immigration process, while also recognizing the importance of protecting refugees and ensuring fairness.
- Establishment of the Canadian Human Rights Commission: The Canadian Human Rights Commission was established in 1977 and is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights in Canada. It plays a role in addressing discrimination and ensuring equal treatment for all individuals, including immigrants and refugees.
- Refugee Protection Division: In 1989, Canada established the Refugee Protection Division as part of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). The division is responsible for making decisions on refugee claims and determining whether individuals meet the criteria for refugee status.
- Canadian Multiculturalism Act: Enacted in 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act recognizes and promotes the multicultural nature of Canadian society. It ensures that all individuals, regardless of their cultural background, are afforded equal rights and opportunities.

While these policy developments were not directly shaped by the MS St. Louis incident, they reflect Canada's evolving approach to immigration and refugee issues, with an emphasis on inclusivity, human rights, and anti-discrimination measures. The MS St. Louis incident and other similar historical events have contributed to shaping public opinion and promoting a more compassionate and equitable approach to immigration and refugee policies in Canada.

In addition to the broader policy developments mentioned earlier, the MS St. Louis incident and its historical significance have had a lasting impact on Canada's approach to immigration and refugee issues. Here are some further points to consider:

- Public Awareness and Advocacy: The MS St. Louis incident generated public awareness and outrage, shedding light on the plight of Jewish refugees and the consequences of restrictive immigration policies. The incident served as a catalyst for advocacy groups and individuals to push for more compassionate immigration and refugee policies in Canada.

- **Policy Reviews and Reforms:** The incident prompted subsequent reviews of Canadian immigration policies and procedures. It led to discussions about the need for fair and inclusive refugee acceptance processes, as well as the importance of preventing discriminatory practices in immigration decision-making.
- **Holocaust Remembrance and Education:** The MS St. Louis incident is now recognized as part of Canada's historical involvement in the Holocaust. It has contributed to educational initiatives and efforts to ensure that the Holocaust is remembered, providing an opportunity for reflection on the importance of providing refuge to those fleeing persecution.
- **Redress and Apology:** In 2018, the Canadian government officially apologized for the country's refusal to provide sanctuary to the passengers of the MS St. Louis. The apology acknowledged the injustice and suffering inflicted upon the refugees and their families, emphasizing the importance of learning from the past to shape more compassionate policies in the future.
- **Influence on Contemporary Policy Discourse:** The MS St. Louis incident continues to be cited in discussions and debates surrounding current immigration and refugee policies in Canada. It serves as a reminder of the need to uphold human rights, protect vulnerable populations, and ensure that decisions regarding refugee status are made with compassion and fairness.

Overall, while the direct policy changes resulting from the MS St. Louis incident may have been limited, its historical significance has contributed to broader discussions on immigration and refugee policies in Canada, promoting a more inclusive and empathetic approach to welcoming those in need of protection.

Statement of apology on behalf of the Government of Canada to the passengers of the MS St. Louis

November 7, 2018
Ottawa, Ontario

Mr. Speaker –

On May 15, 1939, more than nine hundred German Jews boarded an ocean liner known as the *St. Louis*.

The passengers had been stripped of their possessions, chased out of their homes, forced out of their schools, and banned from their professions by their own government.

Their synagogues had been burnt. Their stores raided.

Their clothing scarred with yellow stars, they had been forced to add Israel or Sarah to the names they had known their whole lives. Women and men who had once contributed so much to their country had been labelled as aliens, traitors, and enemies – and treated as such.

Persecuted, robbed, jailed, and killed because of who they were.

Nazi Germany had denied them their citizenship and their fundamental rights.

And yet, when the *St. Louis* set sail from Hamburg that fateful Monday, the more than nine hundred stateless passengers on board considered themselves lucky.

Lucky because they each carried on board an entrance visa to Cuba, a rare chance to escape the tyranny of the Nazi regime under Adolf Hitler.

But by the time the ship docked in Havana Harbour, things would take a turn for the worse. The Cuban government refused to recognize their entrance visas and only a few passengers were allowed to disembark.

Even after men, women, and children threatened mass suicide, entry was denied. And so continued their long and tragic quest for safety. They would request asylum from Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Panama.

Each said no.

On June 2nd, the MS *St. Louis* was forced to leave Havana with no guarantee that they would be welcomed elsewhere.

And after the Americans had denied their appeals, they sought refuge in Canada.

But the Liberal government of Mackenzie King was unmoved by the plight of these refugees.

Despite the desperate plea of the Canadian Jewish community, despite the repeated calls by the government's two Jewish caucus members, despite the many letters from concerned Canadians of different faiths, the government chose to turn its back on these innocent victims of Hitler's regime.

At the time, Canada was home to just eleven million people, of whom only 160,000 were Jews. Yet even that proved to be too many for many Canadians, including Frederick Charles Blair, who then headed the government's immigration branch.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, dated September 1938, the Minister wrote, "Pressure by Jewish people to get into Canada has never been greater than it is now, and I am glad to be able to add that, after 35 years of experience here, that it has never been so carefully controlled." Not a single Jewish refugee was to set foot – let alone settle – on Canadian soil.

The MS *St. Louis* and its passengers had no choice but to return to Europe, where the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, and Holland agreed to take in the refugees.

And then when the Nazis conquered Belgium, France, and Holland, many of them would be murdered in the gruesome camps and gas chambers of the Third Reich.

Mr. Speaker – The story of the *St. Louis* and its passengers is no isolated incident.

The Government of Canada was indifferent to the suffering of Jews long before the *St. Louis* ever set sail for Halifax, and sadly, long after it had returned to Europe.

In the wake of the Great Depression, Canadian lawmakers had begun to tighten restrictions on immigration, adopting policies that were both economically and ethnically selective.

To the government of the day, Jews were among the least desirable immigrants; their presence on our soil had to be limited.

The government imposed strict quotas and an ever-growing list of requirements designed to deter Jewish immigration.

As the Nazis escalated their attacks on the Jews of Europe, the number of visa applications surged.

Canadian relatives, embassy officials, immigration officers, political leaders – all were flooded with calls for help.

Wealthy businessmen promising job creation.

Aging parents vowing to take up farming.

Pregnant women begging for clemency.

Doctors, lawyers, academics, engineers, scientists imploring officials and the government to let them serve our country.

They offered everything they owned, promising to comply with Canada's every request.

These refugees would have made this country stronger, and its people proud.

But the government went to great lengths to ensure that their appeals went nowhere.

That their cries for help were left unanswered, for Canada deemed them unworthy of a home, and undeserving of our help.

By 1938, the world was wrestling with a growing refugee crisis.

When leaders of all nations convened in Evian to discuss the future of Jews in Europe, no country stepped forward to drastically increase its quotas.

Jews were viewed as a threat to be avoided, rather than the victims of a humanitarian crisis. When Canadian lawmakers returned from Evian, they used their power to further tighten rules around Jewish immigration, legitimizing the anti-Semitic sentiment taking hold at home and abroad.

Bitter resentment towards Jews was enshrined in our policies – the same policies immigration officials would later use to justify their callous response to the *St. Louis* and its passengers.

Of all the allied countries, Canada would admit the fewest Jews between 1933 and 1945. Far fewer than the United Kingdom and significantly less per capita than the United States.

And of those it let in, as many as 7,000 of them were labeled as prisoners of war and unjustly imprisoned alongside Nazis.

As far as Jews were concerned, none was too many.

Mr. Speaker – In the years leading up to the war, Hitler tested the world's resolve.

He noted carefully as country after country proved itself indifferent to the plight of Jewish refugees.

He watched on as we refused their visas, ignored their letters, and denied them entry.

With every decree, he challenged the political courage of our leaders and the empathy of those who elected them.

With every pogrom, he tested the bounds of our humanity and the limits of our solidarity.

Mr. Speaker – Adolf Hitler’s test was one the Canadian government failed miserably.

This week marks the 80th sombre anniversary of Kristallnacht, a turning point in Hitler’s racial policy and the beginning of the Holocaust.

Kristallnacht happened on the heels of that Evian conference, where the world cemented its indifference and antipathy towards Jews.

There is little doubt that our silence permitted the Nazis to come up with their own, “final solution” to the so-called Jewish problem.

When Canada joined the war against Germany – when we were fighting for democracy abroad – we were failing Hitler’s victims at home.

What we were willing to do abroad, we were unwilling to do at home.

The plight of the *St. Louis* did not lead to a significant change in policy, nor did alarming reports from across Europe or the gruesome details of a coordinated effort to eliminate Jews.

When the Allies caught wind of the concentration camps, they did not bomb the rail lines that led to Auschwitz, nor did they take concrete action to rescue the remnants of Europe’s Jewish community.

When the war ended, Canada and the Allied power discovered the full horrors of the Holocaust. We joined the world in condemning in the strongest terms the death camps of Hitler and the despicable cruelty of his actions.

And yet, even the industrial mass murder of more than six million Jews did not force a swift change in our immigration policy.

It would take another three years for Canada to open its doors.

Three years before we would take in Jewish refugees at the same rate as we did non-Jewish German nationals at the end of the War.

It would take new leadership, a new world order, and the creation of the State of Israel, a homeland for the Jewish people, for Canada to amend its laws and begin to dismantle the policies that had legitimized and propagated anti-Semitism.

Mr. Speaker – Adolf Hitler alone did not seal the fate of the *St. Louis* passengers or the Jews of Europe.

To harbour such hatred and indifference towards the refugees was to share in the moral responsibility for their deaths.

And while decades have passed since we turned our backs on Jewish refugees, time has by no means absolved Canada of its guilt or lessened the weight of its shame.

Mr. Speaker – Today, I rise in this House to issue a long overdue apology to the Jewish refugees Canada turned away.

We apologize to the 907 German Jews aboard the *MS St. Louis*, as well as their families.

We also apologize to others who paid the price of our inaction, whom we doomed to the ultimate horror of the death camps.

We used our laws to mask our anti-Semitism, our antipathy, and our resentment.

We are sorry for the callousness of Canada's response. And we are sorry for not apologizing sooner.

We apologize to the mothers and fathers whose children we did not save, to the daughters and sons whose parents we did not help –

To the imprisoned Jewish refugees who were forced to relive their trauma next to their tormentors –

To the scientists, artists, engineers, lawyers, businessmen, nurses, doctors, mathematicians, pharmacists, poets, and students –

To every Jew who sought safe haven in Canada, who stood in lines for hours and wrote countless letters.

We refused to help them when we could have. We contributed to sealing the cruel fates of far too many at places like Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Belzec.

We failed them. And for that, we are sorry.

And finally, we apologize to the members of Canada's Jewish community whose voices were ignored, whose calls went unanswered.

We were quick to forget the many ways in which they had helped build this country since its inception.

Quick to forget that they were our friends and neighbours.

That they had educated our youth, cared for our sick, and clothed our poor.

Instead, we let anti-Semitism take hold in our communities and become our official policy. We did not hesitate to circumvent their participation, limit their opportunities, and discredit their talent.

They were meant to feel like strangers in their own homes, aliens in their own land.

We denied them the respect every Canadian, every human being – regardless of origin, regardless of faith – is owed by their government and their fellow citizens.

When Canada turned its back on the Jews of Europe, we turned our backs on Jewish Canadians as well.

It was unacceptable then, and it is unacceptable now.

Your country failed you, and for that, we are sorry.

Mr. Speaker – The story of the *St. Louis* and the ill-treatment of Jews before, during and after the Second World War should fill us with shame.

Shame because these actions run counter to the promise of our country.

That's not the Canada we know today – a Canada far more generous, accepting and compassionate than it once was.

A place where citizenship is first defined by principles and ideals.

Not by race, nor by faith.

But this change in attitudes, this shift in policy was no accident.

It was the work of Canadian men and women who dedicated their lives to making this country more equal and more just.

Men and women who were children of the Holocaust, Jewish refugees, or descendants of the oppressed.

These Jewish men and women took part in social struggles for fairness, justice, and human rights.

At home, they furthered the great Canadian causes that shaped this country – causes that benefitted all Canadians.

Abroad, they fought for democracy and the rule of law, for equality and liberty.

The scope of their impact should not only be recognized, but celebrated.

They were scientists and activists; ministers and singers; physicists and philanthropists.

They were and continue to be proudly Jewish – and proudly Canadian.

They helped open up Canada's eyes and ears to the plight of the most vulnerable.

They taught us Tikkun olam – our responsibility to heal the world.

Mr. Speaker – When Canada chose to turn its back on refugees more than 70 years ago, not only did the government fail to help the most vulnerable, it harmed all of us.

Jewish Canadians have made immense contributions to our country.

As do all the immigrants who have chosen and continue to choose Canada.

As we stand here today, we are reminded of not only how far we've come, but how far we still have to go.

During this Holocaust Education Week, it is all the more impossible to ignore the challenges and injustices still facing Jews in this country.

According to the most recent figures, 17 per cent of all hate crimes in Canada target Jewish people. Far higher per capita than any other group.

Holocaust deniers still exist. Anti-Semitism is still far too present.

Jewish institutions and neighbourhoods are still being vandalized with swastikas.

Jewish students still feel unwelcomed and uncomfortable on some of our college and university campuses because of BDS-related intimidation.

And out of our entire community of nations, it is Israel whose right to exist is most widely – and wrongly – questioned.

Discrimination and violence against Jewish people in Canada and around the world continues at an alarming rate.

Less than two weeks ago, not too far from here, a gunman opened fire on worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, killing eleven people and wounding six others.

Among those wounded were four police officers who had arrived at the scene to defend the congregants.

These worshippers were gathered in peace to practice their faith.

They were murdered in their sanctuary. On Shabbat.

Because they were Jews.

This was a heinous anti-Semitic act of violence.

Motivated by hate.

Designed to inflict pain and stoke fear in the Jewish community.

Canadians were horrified by this vicious attack on the Jewish community and its values.

Across Canada, people organized vigils in honour of the victims.

They stood in solidarity with their Jewish brothers and sisters, and echoed a sentiment shared from coast to coast to coast:

That anti-Semitism and all forms of xenophobia have no place in this country, or anywhere in this world.

Canada and Canadians will continue to stand with the Jewish community and call out the hatred that incited such despicable acts.

These tragic events ultimately attest to the work we still have to do.

Work that begins with education, which is our most powerful tool against the ignorance and cruelty that fuelled the Holocaust.

Because sadly, these evils did not end with the Second World War.

Canada and all Canadians must stand up against xenophobic and anti-Semitic attitudes that still exist in our communities, in our schools, and in our places of work.

We must guard our communities and institutions against the kinds of evils that took hold in the hearts of so many, more than 70 years ago, for they did not end with the War.

Following the recent horrific attack in Pittsburgh, Jewish Canadians are understandably feeling vulnerable.

We know that here in Canada we are not immune to hate crimes grounded in anti-Semitism.

Our government and members of Parliament are working with the Jewish community to better protect their communities against the threat of anti-Semitism.

Places of worship are sacred, and they should be sanctuaries for all faith communities.

There have been clear calls to do more through the Security Infrastructure Program to protect synagogues and other places that are at risk of hate-motivated crimes.

And I pledge to you now: we will do more.

As we stand here today, we must commit ourselves not just to remember, but to act on this tragic history, so that our children and grandchildren flourish in a world in which they are never questioned or attacked because of their identity.

Sadly, this is not yet that world.

Too many people – of all faiths, from all countries – face persecution.

Their lives are threatened simply because of how they pray, what they wear or the last name they bear.

They are forced to flee their homes and embark upon perilous journeys in search of safety and a future.

This is the world we all live in and this is therefore our collective responsibility.

Mr. Speaker – it is my sincere hope that by issuing this long overdue apology, we can shine a light on this painful chapter of our history and ensure that its lessons are never forgotten.

What we can hardly imagine, the passengers of the *MS St. Louis*, the victims of the Holocaust, and their descendants will never forget.

And while no words will ever erase their pain, it is our sincere hope that this apology will help them heal.

That it will bring them some peace.

That it will cement Canada's unwavering commitment to stand with the Jewish community here and around the world in the fight against anti-Semitism.

More than 70 years ago, Canada turned its back on you.

But today, Canadians pledge, now and forever, never again.

MS St. Louis Reflection Questions

Here are some reflection questions you could ask after their research project on the MS St. Louis:

1. What did you find most interesting or surprising about the MS St. Louis and the experiences of its passengers?
2. How do you think the actions of the countries that denied entry to the MS St. Louis passengers affected their lives and the lives of other Jewish refugees during that time?

3. Why do you think it is important to remember and learn about historical events like the MS St. Louis and the Holocaust?
4. How do you think compassion and empathy could have made a difference in the lives of the MS St. Louis passengers?
5. Can you identify any similarities or connections between the treatment of Jewish refugees during World War II and the treatment of refugees in the world today?
6. What lessons can we learn from the MS St. Louis and apply to our lives today in terms of acceptance, inclusivity, and standing up against discrimination?
7. How can we ensure that the stories and experiences of the MS St. Louis and other historical events are remembered and shared for future generations?
8. What steps do you think individuals, communities, or countries can take to promote understanding, compassion, and tolerance?

These reflection questions encourage students to think critically about the historical events and their implications, as well as draw connections to the present. They provide an opportunity for students to express their thoughts, engage in discussions, and consider the significance of the MS St. Louis in relation to themes of empathy, human rights, and social responsibility.

Sample Classroom Resources

For Grades 1-5:

- "The Whispering Town" by Jennifer Elvgren (Picture Book)
- "The Harmonica" by Tony Johnston (Picture Book)
- "Seven Brave Women" by Betsy Hearne (Picture Book)
- "The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark" by Carmen Agra Deedy (Picture Book)

For Grades 6-8:

- "Stolen Words" by Melanie Florence (Picture Book/Graphic Novel)
- "Hana's Suitcase: A True Story" by Karen Levine (Non-fiction)
- "Letters from Rifka" by Karen Hesse (Historical Fiction)
- "The Sound of Freedom" by Kathy Kacer (Historical Fiction)

For Grades 9-12:

- "The Book Thief" by Markus Zusak (Historical Fiction)
- "We Will Not Be Silent: The White Rose Student Resistance Movement That Defied Adolf Hitler" by Russell Freedman (Non-fiction)
- "The Voyage of the MS St. Louis: The Odyssey of an American Jewish Refugee Ship" by Dwight Jon Zimmerman (Non-fiction)
- "Between Shades of Gray" by Ruta Sepetys (Historical Fiction)

These sample books offer varying levels of complexity and can engage students of different age groups. They explore themes of resilience, empathy, and the consequences of discrimination. It's always a good idea to review the content of each book beforehand to ensure it aligns with the specific grade level and student sensitivities.

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT

Assessment: Comparative Analysis Structure

A good assignment for students to examine Canadian refugee policies then and now, with a focus on the MS St. Louis, could be a comparative analysis. Here's a suggested structure for the assignment:

- Research: Have students research the refugee policies of Canada during the time of the MS St. Louis (1939) and compare them to the current refugee policies in Canada.

- **Historical Context:** Ask students to provide a brief overview of the circumstances surrounding the MS St. Louis, including the refusal of entry to the ship's passengers and the subsequent fate of the passengers.
- **Policy Comparison:** Instruct students to identify key similarities and differences between the refugee policies then and now. They should consider factors such as admission criteria, acceptance rates, processing times, and any specific policies or programs related to refugee resettlement.
- **Impact Analysis:** Encourage students to analyze and discuss the impact of the MS St. Louis incident on Canada's refugee policies. Did the events surrounding the MS St. Louis influence or shape any changes in policy or public opinion? How has the country's approach to accepting refugees evolved over time?
- **Case Studies:** Provide students with case studies of specific refugee groups or individuals who sought refuge in Canada both during the time of the MS St. Louis and in more recent years. Ask students to examine the treatment and outcomes of these cases, comparing the experiences of refugees then and now.
- **Reflection:** Prompt students to reflect on the findings of their research and analysis. How do they think the MS St. Louis incident has impacted Canada's approach to accepting refugees? What lessons can be learned from history when it comes to shaping current refugee policies? What improvements or changes, if any, do they think could be made to Canada's current refugee policies?
- **Presentation or Essay:** Have students present their comparative analysis in the form of a presentation or write an essay summarizing their research findings, analysis, and reflections.

This assignment encourages students to delve into historical research, compare refugee policies across different time periods, and critically analyze the impact of historical events on current policies. It promotes an understanding of the complexities and nuances of refugee issues and fosters thoughtful reflection on Canada's approach to accepting refugees, with the MS St. Louis serving as a significant historical reference point.

Assessment: Mini Research Projects

An engaging and educational assessment for elementary students to learn more about the MS St. Louis could be to create a mini research project or a multimedia presentation. Here's a suggested structure for the assessment:

- **Research:** Assign each student a specific aspect of the MS St. Louis or related topic to research. For example, one student could focus on the experiences of the passengers,

another on the countries that denied entry, and another on the historical context of antisemitism during World War II.

- **Gathering Information:** Students should gather relevant information from books, articles, websites, and other resources. Encourage them to take notes and keep track of the sources they use.
- **Visual Presentation:** Have students create a visual presentation to share their findings. They can choose from various options, such as a poster, a slideshow presentation, or a digital infographic. Encourage them to include key facts, images, and quotes to support their research.
- **Oral Presentation:** Provide an opportunity for students to present their findings orally to the class. Encourage them to communicate their research in a clear and engaging manner, using visual aids to support their presentation.
- **Q&A Session:** After each presentation, facilitate a short question and answer session to allow students to ask clarifying questions or seek further information. This can promote discussion and deepen their understanding of the MS St. Louis and related topics.
- **Reflection:** Ask students to reflect on what they learned through this project. What surprised them the most? How do they think the MS St. Louis relates to issues of compassion, empathy, and human rights? Encourage them to think critically and express their thoughts in writing or through class discussions.

This assessment encourages students to conduct research, develop presentation skills, and engage in critical thinking about historical events and their implications. It also allows them to explore different aspects of the MS St. Louis and its significance in a structured and interactive way.

Essay Topics related to the MS St. Louis and refugee policies

1. **The MS St. Louis Incident:** Analyze the events surrounding the MS St. Louis, including the passengers, their journey, and the countries' responses. Explore the reasons for the denial of entry and the implications for the passengers and Jewish refugees during World War II.

2. Canadian Refugee Policies: Compare and contrast Canadian refugee policies during the time of the MS St. Louis with current policies. Examine the factors that influenced refugee acceptance then and now, and discuss the impact of the MS St. Louis incident on Canada's approach to accepting refugees.
3. Humanitarian Responses: Investigate the responses of organizations and individuals who advocated for the acceptance of the MS St. Louis passengers. Explore the role of humanitarian efforts in assisting refugees and combating discrimination during World War II.
4. Lessons from the MS St. Louis: Reflect on the lessons that can be learned from the MS St. Louis incident and how they can be applied to contemporary refugee situations. Discuss the importance of compassion, empathy, and taking action against discrimination in addressing the needs of refugees.
5. Historical Remembrance: Explore the ways in which the MS St. Louis has been remembered and commemorated over time. Discuss the significance of historical remembrance in keeping the stories and lessons of the MS St. Louis alive, and the impact it has on shaping collective memory and understanding.
6. These topics provide opportunities for students to engage in research, critical thinking, and reflection while examining different aspects of the MS St. Louis and its relevance to refugee policies. They can be adjusted based on the grade level to align with the students' research skills and abilities.

The assessment for the topics mentioned can vary depending on the grade level and desired learning outcomes. Here are a few assessment ideas for each of the essay or research topics:

1. The MS St. Louis Incident Essay: Have students write a well-structured essay that provides an overview of the MS St. Louis incident, including the passengers, their journey, and the countries' responses. Assess their ability to present accurate information and analyze the implications of the incident.
2. Presentation: Ask students to create a multimedia presentation (e.g., slideshow, video) summarizing the key events and significance of the MS St. Louis. Evaluate their ability to effectively communicate information and convey the historical context.
3. Canadian Refugee Policies Comparative Analysis: Assign students to research and write a comparative analysis of Canadian refugee policies during the time of the MS St. Louis and current policies. Evaluate their ability to identify and discuss key similarities and differences, supported by evidence and examples.
4. Debate: Divide students into groups and conduct a structured debate on the topic of Canadian refugee policies then and now. Assess their ability to construct arguments, support their claims, and engage in respectful dialogue.

5. Humanitarian Responses Research Paper: Have students conduct research on humanitarian responses to the MS St. Louis incident, focusing on organizations or individuals involved in advocating for the acceptance of the passengers. Assess their ability to gather information, analyze different perspectives, and draw conclusions.
6. Creative Project: Allow students to showcase their understanding of humanitarian responses through a creative project, such as a visual display, a short film, or a multimedia collage. Evaluate their ability to effectively communicate the significance of humanitarian efforts.
7. Lessons from the MS St. Louis Reflective Essay: Assign students to write a reflective essay discussing the lessons that can be learned from the MS St. Louis incident and how they can be applied to contemporary refugee situations. Assess their ability to articulate thoughtful insights and provide examples to support their arguments.
8. Group Discussion: Facilitate a group discussion where students can share their reflections on the lessons from the MS St. Louis. Assess their ability to contribute meaningfully to the discussion, listen to others' perspectives, and build upon ideas.
9. Historical Remembrance Research Presentation: Ask students to research and create a presentation on the ways in which the MS St. Louis has been remembered and commemorated over time. Evaluate their ability to gather and present information, and analyze the significance of historical remembrance.
10. Creative Writing: Invite students to write a short story or poem inspired by the MS St. Louis and its remembrance. Assess their ability to engage with the emotional and historical aspects of the topic, as well as their creativity in storytelling.

These assessment ideas promote research skills, critical thinking, effective communication, and thoughtful reflection on the topics related to the MS St. Louis and refugee policies. The choice of assessment method should align with the students' grade level, abilities, and the desired learning outcomes.

Similar events to the MS St Louis tragedy in Canada

The MS St. Louis tragedy was a significant event that took place in 1939 when a ship carrying Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany was denied entry to several countries, including Canada, and was forced to return to Europe. While Canada's refusal to accept the refugees aboard the MS St. Louis was a tragic event, there are no identical incidents in Canada's history. However,

there have been other events and policies related to immigration and refugees in Canada's past that are worth mentioning. Here are a few examples:

1. **Komagata Maru Incident (1914):** The Komagata Maru was a ship carrying 376 passengers, primarily Sikh immigrants from India, who sought to settle in Canada. However, the Canadian government implemented exclusionary immigration laws targeting South Asian immigrants, and the ship was denied entry in Vancouver. After months of legal battles and protests, the ship was forced to return to India, where many passengers faced arrest or persecution upon their arrival.
2. **Chinese Head Tax (1885-1923):** The Chinese Head Tax was a discriminatory policy implemented by the Canadian government that imposed a fee on Chinese immigrants entering Canada. The tax started at \$50 in 1885 and increased to \$500 by 1903, which created significant financial burdens for Chinese immigrants and limited their ability to bring their families to Canada.
3. **Japanese Canadian Internment (1942-1949):** During World War II, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Canadian government enacted policies that resulted in the forced relocation and internment of Japanese Canadians, primarily in British Columbia. Approximately 22,000 Japanese Canadians, many of whom were Canadian citizens, were displaced from their homes, had their property confiscated, and were interned in camps for the duration of the war.
4. **Indian Residential Schools:** From the late 19th century until the 1990s, Canada operated a system of Indian Residential Schools, which were government-funded and church-run institutions aimed at assimilating Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture. The schools forcibly separated Indigenous children from their families, suppressed their languages and cultures, and subjected them to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The long-lasting impact of this policy has been acknowledged as a dark chapter in Canadian history.
5. **Refugee Detention Policies:** Canada has implemented various policies regarding the detention of refugees and asylum seekers. For example, the use of immigration detention centers to hold individuals awaiting immigration decisions has faced criticism for issues related to the length of detention, conditions within the facilities, and the lack of independent oversight. These policies have raised concerns about human rights violations and the treatment of vulnerable individuals.
6. **1962 Immigration Regulations:** Until 1962, Canada had a discriminatory immigration policy that heavily favored immigrants from Europe, while imposing restrictive measures on non-European immigrants. The 1962 Immigration Regulations abolished racial and ethnic preferences, marking a significant shift towards a more inclusive immigration system.

7. **Syrian Refugee Crisis (2015-2016):** In response to the ongoing conflict in Syria, Canada launched a large-scale resettlement program to welcome Syrian refugees. Under this initiative, known as the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Program, Canada committed to accepting over 25,000 Syrian refugees between November 2015 and February 2016. The program received international attention and was seen as a positive example of refugee resettlement efforts.

Sample Lesson: "Journey of Hope: Exploring the MS St. Louis and Komagata Maru Incident"

Objective: The objective of this activity is to examine and raise awareness about two significant incidents in history: the MS St. Louis and Komagata Maru Incident. By exploring these events, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by refugees and immigrants during different periods, fostering empathy, and promoting discussions on humanitarian issues.

Duration: Approximately 90 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Projector or large screen
 - Laptop or computer
 - Internet access
 - Paper and pens/pencils for participants
-

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Welcome the participants and introduce the topic of the activity: the MS St. Louis and Komagata Maru Incident.
- Provide a brief overview of the historical context and significance of the incidents.
- Explain the objectives and the format of the activity.

Presentation: MS St. Louis Incident (20 minutes)

- Use the projector or screen to present a slideshow or video presentation about the MS St. Louis Incident.
- Highlight key details such as the voyage of the MS St. Louis, the plight of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, their unsuccessful attempts to find asylum, and the eventual tragic outcome.
- Include personal stories and photographs to evoke empathy among participants.

Group Discussion: MS St. Louis Incident (15 minutes)

- Divide participants into small groups of 4-6 people.
- Provide a set of discussion questions related to the MS St. Louis Incident, such as:
- What were the reasons behind the refusal of the MS St. Louis refugees at various ports?
- What impact did this incident have on refugee policies and international response?
- How can we prevent similar incidents from happening in the future?

Presentation: Komagata Maru Incident (20 minutes)

- Present another slideshow or video about the Komagata Maru Incident, focusing on the voyage of the Komagata Maru ship, the journey of Indian immigrants seeking a better life in Canada, their denial of entry, and the subsequent consequences.
- Share photographs, personal accounts, and newspaper clippings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the incident.

Group Discussion: Komagata Maru Incident (15 minutes)

- Continue with the small groups and provide discussion questions related to the Komagata Maru Incident, such as:
- What factors contributed to the denial of entry to the Indian immigrants on the Komagata Maru?

- How did this incident affect immigration policies and relations between India and Canada?
- What lessons can be learned from the Komagata Maru Incident to promote inclusivity and address discrimination today?

Reflection and Conclusion (15 minutes)

- Reconvene the participants and allow each group to share key insights and perspectives from their discussions.
- Facilitate a brief Q&A session to address any additional questions or concerns.
- Summarize the main takeaways from both incidents, emphasizing the importance of empathy, understanding, and fostering a more inclusive society.
- Provide participants with resources for further reading or research, such as books, documentaries, or websites.

Note: It is essential to approach sensitive historical topics with care and create a safe and respectful environment for discussion. The facilitator should be prepared to address any emotional responses and provide appropriate support if needed.

Comparing and Contrasting the MS St Louis and Komagata Maru Incident

The MS St. Louis incident and the Komagata Maru incident can be compared and contrasted in several ways. Here are some points of comparison and contrast:

- Historical Context:

- MS St. Louis: The incident took place in 1939 during World War II when Jewish refugees were attempting to escape Nazi Germany.
- Komagata Maru: The incident occurred in 1914 when a ship carrying Indian immigrants was denied entry into Canada due to discriminatory immigration policies.
- Refugees/Immigrants:
 - MS St. Louis: The passengers on the MS St. Louis were predominantly Jewish refugees fleeing persecution and seeking asylum in the Americas.
 - Komagata Maru: The Komagata Maru carried Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu immigrants from India who were hoping to settle in Canada.
- Denied Entry:
 - MS St. Louis: The ship initially set sail to Cuba, but upon arrival, the Cuban government refused to allow the passengers to disembark. The United States and Canada also denied entry.
 - Komagata Maru: The ship arrived in Vancouver, Canada, where the passengers were not allowed to land due to racist immigration laws and policies. The ship was eventually forced to return to India.
- International Response:
 - MS St. Louis: The MS St. Louis traveled along the coast of the Americas, seeking refuge, but was denied entry at multiple ports. It was only allowed to dock in Belgium and the United Kingdom, with some passengers finding safety there.
 - Komagata Maru: The Canadian government resisted allowing the passengers to disembark, leading to a two-month standoff. Eventually, the ship was forcibly escorted back to India, where some passengers faced persecution upon their return.
- Impact:
 - MS St. Louis: The MS St. Louis incident highlighted the reluctance of countries to accept Jewish refugees during a time of increasing persecution. It had a significant impact on refugee policies and increased awareness of the plight of Jewish refugees.
 - Komagata Maru: The Komagata Maru incident exposed the discriminatory immigration policies in Canada and sparked protests and debates around racism and the treatment of immigrants. It had a profound impact on Indian-Canadian relations and immigration policies.
- Lessons Learned:
 - MS St. Louis: The incident highlighted the importance of humanitarian action and the need for countries to provide refuge to those fleeing persecution. It serves as a reminder of the consequences of turning away refugees in times of crisis.

- Komagata Maru: The incident exposed the need for inclusive and non-discriminatory immigration policies and sparked discussions on systemic racism and the treatment of immigrants. It serves as a lesson in promoting diversity and addressing historical injustices.

While both incidents share similarities in terms of denied entry and the plight of refugees/immigrants, they occurred in different historical contexts and involved distinct groups of people. Their impact and lessons learned also varied, emphasizing the unique challenges faced by different communities in their pursuit of safety and a better life.