

# Alive Activity 2

## Our National Anthem

### Organise and Run a Song Contest

#### Setting the Context

The teacher explains that according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, a National Anthem is a hymn or song expressing patriotic sentiment and either governmentally authorized as an official national hymn or holding that position in popular feeling... some national anthems [are] written especially for the purpose, others [are] adapted from existing tunes. The sentiments of national anthems vary, from prayers for the monarch to allusions to nationally important battles or uprisings.

Many of the older National Anthems were composed during a period of national crisis. Most texts of National Anthems display a patriotic fervour – the forms and images used can be very revealing about the character of the nation at the time the words were composed.

**What are the attitudes of your school community to our National Anthem and what would you choose as a new anthem if it were to change?**

#### Time

This activity should take you no longer than ten hours of research and preparation.

#### Research

The teacher organises the class to research current attitudes within the school and to run a competition to compose a new national anthem, or change the words to the existing one.

- » Design and carry out a survey in the school or among a selected number of classes to find out attitudes to the Irish National Anthem
- » Advertise a school competition to compose a new anthem (or change the words of the existing one)

#### Preparing Event

A school based anthem contest needs to be prepared where the winning anthem needs to be chosen.

#### Event Preparation

- » Decide on audience (representatives from classes or a lunchtime activity open to all)
- » Organise for local press to be there
- » Prepare opening speeches
- » Prepare a short presentation on the research findings
- » Chose judges for the competition
- » Organise venue
- » Organise running order
- » Organise the right equipment

#### Sample Activities on the Day

- » Prepare refreshments
- » Meeting and greeting people
- » Presentation
- » Making sure equipment is all in place
- » Give vote of thanks

#### Potential Partner Activity

- » Using the idea of anthems, ask your partner school to send you an audio or video tape of them singing their anthem and learn it as part of your European Awareness week.
- » Send your top three entries of school competition to your partner school and ask them to be your international judges, giving their overall assessment of the new anthems, and their result.
- » Together with your partner school, write and learn a new European anthem.

# Sample Questionnaire

## Attitudes to Irish National Anthem

Is the Irish National Anthem important to you?			
Very	Fairly	No	

When did you last join in singing the National Anthem?			
Last month	In the last 6 months	Never	Don't remember

Do you know the words of the Irish National Anthem?			
Yes	Some	No	

Are the words of the National Anthem relevant to modern Ireland?			
Very relevant	Fairly relevant	Not relevant	Don't know

When did you last join in singing the National Anthem?			
Proud	Embarrassed	Neutral	Other

How do you feel when you hear the National Anthem being played at International Events?			
Very Emotive	Fairly Emotive	Not Emotive	Don't know

National anthems should be emotive. How emotive is the Irish National Anthem?		
Yes	No	