

# Hatikvah - Hope [Elementary]



## Brief

The objective of this activity is to introduce children to the history and meaning of Hatikva, Israel's national anthem.

### Age Group

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School
- Staff

### Topics

- Community
- Culture
- Politics
- Zionism

### Shabbat

- Shabbat Appropriate
- Not Shabbat Appropriate
- Adaptable for Shabbat

## Equipment

- Pictures of symbols
- Hatikva puzzle kits (sufficient quantity for group size divided by 2 or 3)
- Large screen TV, laptop or tablet to play the audio and video recordings of Hatikva.

**Activity length:** 35-40 minutes

- Introduction (10 minutes)
- Learn the words and meaning of Hatikva (25-30 minutes)

## Adaptable for Shabbat

The program is not ideal for Shabbat because it requires playing Hatikva and using art supplies.

## ➔ Goals & Overview

1. Understand the background, words, meaning of the Israeli national anthem.
2. Discuss the concept of hope in Israeli and Jewish life.

### Thought Questions / שאלות למחשבה

1. What significance does an anthem have in building a national identity?
2. What feelings does hearing or singing Hatikva invoke within you?
3. Does the anthem need to represent all the citizens of Israel?
4. If you were tasked with writing a new anthem what would its message be?
5. What is hope? Why is it important to the individual, to the citizen, to the nation?
6. What gives you hope in times of darkness and despair?
7. In what way does hope embody the Israeli spirit?
8. What is the difference between optimism and hope?

### For the facilitator

Hatikvah, the Hebrew word for "The Hope," is the national anthem of Israel. It was taken from a longer poem titled "Tikvatenu" (our hope), written in the late 1800's by Naftali Herz Imber, a little-known Polish Jewish poet. In 1888, Samuel Cohen, a young Jew living in the land of Israel, found himself humming a melody based on an old Moldavian-Romanian folk song. This tune was soon embraced with enthusiasm. It is in a minor key, which is usually not used for national anthems because it has a somber sound. However, the words stand in stark contrast to this melancholy tone, conveying the 2,000-year-old hope of the Jewish people to return to their homeland as a free nation. The poem resonated with Zionist pioneers and became an unofficial anthem for the movement, eventually gaining official recognition at the First Zionist Congress in 1897. Interestingly, Hatikvah was only formally adopted as Israel's national anthem in 2004, over 50 years after the country's founding. Despite its widespread use, Hatikvah has faced criticism over the years. Some religious Jews feel it lacks explicit religious references, while broader concerns focus on non-Jewish citizens, who struggle to connect with an anthem solely focused on Jewish aspirations. This lack of connection has led some non-Jewish officials to decline singing the anthem. Some argue that Hatikvah reflects the yearning of a diaspora Jew (Ashkenazi Jews to be precise), longing for a return to a historical homeland. Critics argue that this perspective doesn't fully represent the experience of many Israelis, who identify as Israeli first and foremost. Despite the controversy, Hatikvah remains a powerful symbol of hope and longing for the Jewish people, sung at official events both in Israel and by Jewish communities around the world.

## ➔ Program [Elementary]

1. **Intro** (10 mins)
  - a. Show the chanichim pictures of symbols and ask what they might represent [RESOURCE 1].
  - b. Continue with a short discussion about the symbols of a county. Ask/tell chanichim:
    - i. What are some examples of symbols that represent a country? (flag, emblem, anthem)
    - ii. Have you ever heard a song that makes you feel proud, excited, or hopeful about your country? Team? Camp?
    - iii. An anthem is a special melody that represents a group of people, their history, what they believe in, and their dreams for the future.
    - iv. Can you suggest examples of an anthem they've heard before?
2. **Activity: Learning the words of Hatikva** (25-30 mins)
  - a. Read background information about Hatikva [RESOURCE 2].
  - b. Listen to the audio recording of Hatikva [RESOURCE 3]
    - i. Ask chanichim to share what emotions arise when hearing Hatikva.
  - c. Watch the video recording of Hatikva on the light rail [RESOURCE 4].
    - i. Ask chanichim if they see or feel something different from looking at the faces and reactions of the people on the light rail.
  - d. Read the English of Hatikva [RESOURCE 5].
  - e. Ask chanichim why Israel's anthem is called "Hatikva."
    - i. What is the hope expressed in the anthem?
    - ii. Why have Jews always considered Israel to be our "home."
    - iii. Has the "hope" been realized?
    - iv. What have the Jewish people done to realize our "hope" of living in our homeland?
  - f. Distribute Hatikva puzzle kits [RESOURCE 6].
    - i. Chanichim should be able to listen to a recording of Hatikva to help them put the lines in order.
    - ii. Chanichim should be asked to read or sing Hatikva after they finish their puzzle.