

# Olympism

## a matter of principle



### curriculum strands and links

**Social Studies:** Time, Continuity, Change  
Social Organisation, Culture & Heritage  
**English:** Speaking, Listening, Writing, Presenting  
**Links to** Health & Physical Education, Art and Craft  
**Levels 3-5**

classroom activities to celebrate and promote the principles of Modern Olympism sponsored by the New Zealand Olympic Committee

### Background Notes

- This year, the eyes of the world will be on Athens for the Celebration of the Games of the 28th Olympiad.
- With the huge media coverage and highly visible promotion of an Olympic Games, it is easy to forget the important principles and ideals behind the Olympic Movement - the spirit of Modern Olympism.
- It is important that we take time with our children to use this opportunity to promote these principles and ideals in a context that they can understand - their school and community.
- In this unit we encourage children to explore these principles and apply them to their everyday lives - 365 days a year.

### Discussion Starters

- Introduce the idea of a principle as a basic rule, a guide or a set of rules that we can use to help us live our lives. We often call these principles 'ideals'. Challenge students to list some principles that they believe to be important when ...
  - they are dealing with their friends and other people
  - they are playing sport and games
  - they are learning new things at school
  - they are looking after their bodies
- Tell students that the Ancient Greeks believed so strongly in the following principles that they celebrated them every 4 years at the Ancient Olympic Games:
  - people should develop their minds and have healthy bodies
  - people should always try to do their best in everything they do
  - people should treat each other fairly and always consider the rights of others
  - people should place a high value on music, art and literature
  - people can be brought together through sport and education
- Compare these principles with the student lists.



### Modern Olympism

- Share the following with your students. Frenchman - Pierre de Coubertin who established the Modern Olympic Movement in 1894, modernised the ancient Greek ideals and principles of Olympism. He believed that *'By blending sport with culture and education, Olympism promotes a way of life based on:*
  - the balanced development of the mind, body and character
  - the joy found in effort
  - the educational value in being a good role model for others
  - observing the universal ethics of tolerance, generosity, unity, friendship, non discrimination and respect for others'.
- Coubertin believed that using sport was a way of helping people develop these principles and would lead to building a peaceful world where all people were valued human beings.

### Exploring the Principles of Olympism

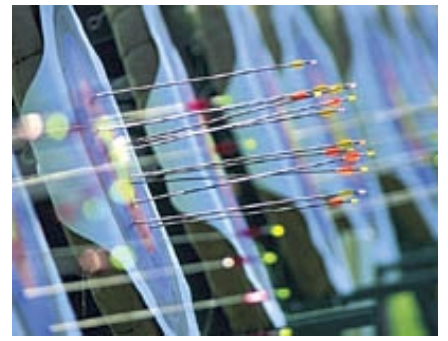
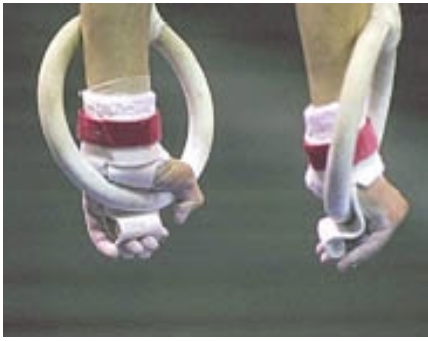
#### Balanced Development

- In groups, analyse the classroom timetable. How much time during the week is taken up with each subject area? Divide the curriculum areas into suitable categories, **eg** cultural, academic, sporting. Display in graphic or table form.
- Do the students feel that this is a good balance? Justify answers.
- Extend the survey into student's out-of-school lives. What percentage of their time is taken up by different pursuits? (new categories may be added) Why do they think it is important to have a good balance and variety of activities in their lives? Can they say how this will make them a better person?

#### Joy Found in Effort

- Have students recall and share a time when they tried their very best to achieve a goal, **eg** in sport, completing a homework project.
- Why does it always feel better when we try our hardest and strive to do our very best?
- Can students think of a time related to sport when they have not won but still felt good about themselves. Why was this?





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### Being a Good Role Model

- Most students will have been told many times that they must set a good example. Why do they think that this is considered to be so important?
- Have students brainstorm and list people involved in sport, the arts, in their school and local community whom they admire. What attributes do they admire most about them? Do they set a good example?
- Have students list areas that they believe it is important for them to set a good example, particularly for younger school children.

### Understanding Ethics

- Explain that ethics is a name for an unwritten set of rules about how we can deal fairly with and treat other people.

- Challenge groups to come up with a set of rules that they consider important when dealing with other people.
- Tell students the ethics of Olympism are
  - *tolerance*
  - *generosity*
  - *unity*
  - *friendship*
  - *respect*
  - *non discrimination*
- Help students come up with a definition of each that is within their understanding.
- Do they think that the world would be a better place if all human beings observed this set of ethics?
- Keep a media watch for a week. Find examples in the world or local news ...
  - *that show good ethics at work*
  - *of situations which could have been avoided or improved if dealt with ethically.*

### Sport is the Vehicle

#### The Olympism Challenge

- Explain that in founding the Modern Olympic Movement, Coubertin believed that sport plays a very important part in promoting these principles to the world.
- Groups or individual students select one sport that they participate in or is played in their community. Their challenge is to identify aspects of the taking part in this sport that will clearly demonstrate the principles of modern Olympism being applied, **eg** being a good role model, establishing new friendships, accepting different points of view, bringing a community closer together, understanding other cultures ...
- Produce as a series of promotional posters.

