

Topic

Poem *Gingi* written by Miriam Yalan Steklis
 Royal paraphernalia and colors in Hebrew
 Challenge and Response

Grade Level(s):

6th – 8th

Big Ideas

Identifying with biblical characters can provide inspiration and encouragement, showing that even those who struggle with self-doubt can find purpose and fulfillment.

Learning Targets

Students will:

1. Read and analyze the poem “Gingi” by Miriam Yalan Shteklis
2. Reflect on the importance of embracing their own unique traits and how they can embrace others’ unique traits as well
3. Learn Hebrew words related to royal paraphernalia and colors

Materials / Technology Needed

- Red wig, crown, throne, wig with golden curls, scepter, chalice, robe, signet ring, etc.
- Ginger root
- [Poem Gingi read in Hebrew](#)
- Copies of the poem *Gingi* in English and Hebrew (1 per learner)
- Art supplies including markers of all colors and paints, or pencils red, yellow, gold, and orange
- Memory game supplied on page 9

Relevant Vocabulary

גִּינְגִי/גִּינְגִימ (<i>Gingi, Gingim</i>)	[See Background for an explanation of this word.]
מִלָּה לִזְעִית (<i>Milah Lo'azit</i>)	A Hebrew word from another language (literally: foreign word)
אֲדֹמוֹנִי (<i>Admoni</i>)	Ruddy; literally red
הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד (<i>Hamelekh David</i>)	King David
הַיֵּכָל (<i>Heikhal</i>)	Palace
כִּסֵּא הַמַּלְכוּת (<i>Kise ha'malkhut</i>)	Royal throne
שָׁרְבִיט (<i>Sharvit</i>)	Scepter
כֶּתֶר (<i>Keter</i>)	Crown
תַּנ"ךְ (<i>Tanakh</i>)	Torah (the five Books of Moses), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings)
מְלָכִים א' (<i>Melakhim Aleph</i>)	I Kings (The Book of Kings is found as two books, I Kings and II Kings—it is the fourth book in <i>Nevi'im</i>)
שְׁמוּאֵל א' / ב' (<i>Shmuel Aleph / Bet</i>)	I / II Samuel (The Book of Samuel is found as two books, I Samuel and II Samuel—it is the third book in <i>Nevi'im</i>)

Background

Gingi

The Hebrew word גִּינְגִי is a *milah lo'azit* that comes from the British English *ginger*, which is used as a nickname for a person with red hair, usually with freckles. However, the gamut of the color *gingi* ranges from red to orange to blond to gold to auburn. Red hair is rare in the general population (1 – 2%), and people with this color hair may feel different or experience bias. There are also some stereotypes related to red heads as being temperamental, fiery, and quick to respond. Most Jewish *gingim* are *Ashkenazim*. While commonly intended in a friendly or lighthearted way, the term *gingi* may at times be regarded as a label or even as an unwelcome intrusion. In 2014, a conference for *gingim* took place at Kibbutz Gezer to facilitate group discussions about breaking stigmas, and forging friendship among *gingim*.

King David

Unlike King Solomon's golden throne, which is described in some detail ([1 Melakhim 10:18 – 20](#)), King David's physical throne is not specifically described in the *Tanakh*. Instead, David's future throne is described as a powerful spiritual idea, representing God's promise that David's kingdom will be secure and will last forever ([2 Shmuel 7:13 – 16](#)).

King David was chosen by God to be king of Israel, even though he allegedly did not look particularly strong or tall in comparison to the previous king, Saul ([1 Shmuel 9:2](#)), or in comparison to his seven brothers ([1 Shmuel 16:10 – 11](#)). In fact, God asked the prophet Samuel, who was in charge, to anoint David as a King, not to look at the candidate's appearance or stature but rather at his inner character and his heart ([1 Shmuel 16:7](#)). It seems that David was selected to be king even though he was the youngest in his family, with a smaller build, handsome and ruddy; and mainly chosen because of his heart.

מרים ילן שטקליס - Miriam Yalan-Shteklis

Miriam Yalan-Shteklis (1900-1984) was a Hebrew poet. She was born in Kremenchug, Russia. She came from a long line of rabbis and learned Hebrew as a child. She studied at different universities in Russia, Germany, and France, learning humanities and library science. She settled in Jerusalem in 1920. A few years later she became the director of the Slavic department at the National University Library (currently The National Library of Israel). Despite not having children of her own, she became a children's writer. In an interview she was asked, "What is the inspiration for children's poems?" She replied, "In the cradle of pain." She was awarded the 1956 Israel Prize for Children's Literature.

Description of Activities

- 1) Sitting in a circle, arrange to have another teacher look after learners for 5 minutes. Go out of the classroom and put on a wig of color *gingi* (remember this ranges from red, orange, blond, gold, to auburn). Make sure the color you choose is different from your regular hair color. Enter the room, sit in the circle, and ask learners:
 - i) How do I look?
 - ii) How does the change of hair make me different?
 - iii) How do you think it feels to look different from most people?
 - iv) How many people do you know with this color hair? How often do you see people with this color hair?
 - v) How do you think people born with this color hair are viewed in our society?
 - vi) Can you think of famous historical figures with this color hair?

(1) Note: Learners are not expected to know the answers to these exploratory questions (2 thru 6).
- 2) Tell learners that we are going to read a poem about a *gingi*. Show learners the ginger root. Explain that *gingi* refers to someone with ginger-colored hair, and then ask learners what color hair they think a *gingi* has. Explain that it is usually red but can also refer to a range from red to orange to blond to gold to auburn.
- 3) Read the poem first in English and then let learners hear the poem in [Hebrew](#) (at least two times). Ask them to follow the lines with their fingers.
- 4) Distribute color markers and do a guided Hebrew reading asking learners to circle colors with the appropriate markers. Examples:
 - i) Ask learners to circle the word תַּכְּלֵת with a light blue marker, אָדָם with a red marker, etc. Use the color table on page 7.
 - ii) Highlight the letter ׁ in the words below (the letter ׁ at the end of these words declines, indicating “my” followed by the particular noun: מִחֲמַדִּי (my darling); לִדִּי (my child); קִטְנֹטוֹנִי (my little one); אֶפְרוּחִי (my chick)). Who says those words to *Gingi*? What feeling do these words elicit?
 - iii) In what person is the poem told? What effect does it have on the reader?
 - iv) King David tells the child: גַּם אֲנִי גִינְגִי! - וַיֵּרְאֶה - And see, I am also *gingi*! What does this pronouncement do for *Gingi*?

- 5) Discussion: Below are some questions to stimulate discussion, not in a particular order.
- i) What makes you unique, and how do you feel about it?
 - ii) Have you ever felt different from others? How did that experience shape you?
 - iii) Why do you think people sometimes struggle to accept what makes them different?
 - iv) Can you think of a time when embracing your uniqueness helped you in life?
 - v) How do your differences make the world a more interesting place?
 - vi) Why is it important to embrace your unique traits?
 - vii) Why do people sometimes judge others based on appearances?
 - viii) What do you think of the idiom **אַל תִּסְתַּכֵּל בְּקִנְיָן אֲלֵא בְּמָה שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ** —Don't look at the jar, but at what's in it. How does it relate to the poem?
 - ix) How can we celebrate differences rather than criticize them?
 - x) Have you ever changed something about yourself to fit in? How did that feel?
 - xi) Do any physical traits of a biblical or Jewish figure make you identify with him/her?
 - xii) Why do some cultures value uniqueness while others encourage conformity?
 - xiii) How can we help others feel proud of who they are?
- 6) Going back to our poem: What do you think *Gingi* answered to King David?
- i) In pairs, create a dialogue between King David and *Gingi* in which one learner is King David and the other one is *Gingi*.
- 7) Brainstorm ways to advocate for people who feel different from the majority of people.

Differentiation Options

Knowing that students learn in a variety of ways and modalities, the following options are provided to adjust the above lesson to meet the unique needs of your learners.

For learners who need more assistance

- Ask students to illustrate the poem.
- Play a memory game with English or Hebrew words and pictures. (Use the table on page 9).
- Let learners dress up with royal props (if they so desire).

For learners who need extension opportunities

- Pretend you are a reporter. Create 3 – 5 questions and interview *gingi* people in your community. Produce a news story that reports the result of your interviews (without naming names).

שיר ג'ינג'י

Mom always says: my darling,	אמא אומרת תמיד : מחמד,י
My child has a golden head,	לילדי ראש זהב,
A golden head has my child.	ראש זהב לילדי.
And in the street, they call me ...gingi	וברחוב הם קוראים לי ... ג'ינג'י.
In class, they call me gingi	בפתח הם קוראים לי ג'ינג'י
Even at night inside my pillow	אפילו בלילה בתוך תוך כרי
My hair kindles!	יבער שערי!
Gingi...	ג'ינג'י..
Many are the colors you made, My God -	רבים הצבעים עמד, אדני -
You spread light blue on the sky,	תכלת פרשת על פני השמים,
And my mom has brown on her eyes,	ולאמא שלי חומות העינים,
The leaf has green, and the rose pink,	ירק לעלה, ולגורד ורד,
Or white, or red, and there are more colors!	או לבן, או אדם, ועוד יש, ועוד!
Many are the colors you made, God,	רבים הצבעים עמד, אדני,
Beautiful and many!	יפים ומרבים!
Why did you create yellow-haired children,	ולמה בראת לך ילדים צהבים,
My God, yellow-haired children?	אדני, צהבים?

I cried this evening before going to sleep,	בְּכִיתִי הָעֶרֶב לִפְנֵי הַשָּׁנָה,
And mom came by, and there was a tear on her eye.	וְאִמָּא נִגְשָׁה, וְדַמְעָה בְּעֵינָהּ.
“My dear, my dear:” she whispered...	מִחֲמַדִּי, לְחֻשָׁה, מִחֲמַדִּי...
And at night came Elijah,	וּבַלַּיְלָה בַּלַּיְלָה וְנִבֹּא אֱלִיָּהוּ,
And stood my me,	וַיַּעֲמֵד עַל יָדַי,
And said: “Get up, get up, my child!”	וַיֹּאמֶר : קוּמָה, קוּמָה, יְלָדִי!
And he wrapped me in the corner of his robe	וַיִּכְנַף אֶדְרֹתָיו עָטְפָנִי
And carried me	וַיִּשָּׂאֲנִי-
Upward.	אֶל עַל.
And there in the heavens, in the Garden of Eden - a palace,	וְשָׁם בְּמַרוֹם, בְּגֵן עֵדֶן, - הַיִּכָּל,
And in the palace - a royal throne,	וּבֹו בְּהֵיכַל - כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכוֹת,
In which King David sat,	וַיּוֹשֵׁב לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד,
And in his hand, the scepter,	וּבְיָדוֹ הַשֶּׁרֶבִיט,
And a lion to his right, and a lion to his left,	וְאַרְי מִיְמִינוֹ וְאַרְי מִשְּׂמָאלוֹ,
And his servants and minsters stand in front of him,	וְעוֹמְדִים לְפָנָיו מִשְׁרָתָיו וְשָׂרָיו,
And ten of thousands of his army stand in front of him,	וְעוֹמְדִים לְפָנָיו רַבְבוֹת חֵילוֹתָיו,
And everything is - gold.	וְהַכֹּל זָהָב.

And behind the crown his curls come down -	ומתחת לכֶּתֶר יוֹרְדִים תִּלְתְּלוּ -
King David's curls are yellow,	צֹהָבִים תִּלְתְּלוּ שֶׁל הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד,
His curls are yellow!	צֹהָבִים תִּלְתְּלוּ!
And he is completely ruddy.	וְכֵלֹ אֲדָמוֹנִי.
And King David said:	וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד :
Come to me, little one,	גֵּשׁ אֵלַי, קִטְנוֹנִי,
My naive one,	פְּתִי שְׁלִי,
And see - I am also gingi!	וּרְאֵה - גַּם אֲנִי גִינְגִי!
And he looked me in the eye,	וְהִבִּיט אֶל עֵינַי,
And looked inside me,	וְהִבִּיט אֶל תּוֹכִי,
And he whispered: "my chick, my chick"	וַיִּלְחֹשׁ : אֶפְרוּחִי, אֶפְרוּחִי,
My gingli	גִּינְגִי שְׁלִי!
This is what David said, this is what the King said.	כֵּן אָמַר לִי דָּוִד, כֵּן אָמַר לִי הַמֶּלֶךְ.
And my mom -	וְאִמָּא שְׁלִי -
She was also stood by me,	גַּם הִיא שָׁם הִיָּתָה עִמָּדִי,
And whispered - my darling,	וְלַחֲשָׁה - מִחֲמַדִּי,
My darling...	מִחֲמַדִּי...

צבעים - Colors

תכלת – light blue

חום – brown

ירוק – green

ורוד – pink









לבן – white

אדום – red

צהוב – yellow

זהב – gold

זהב – gold

ג'ינג'י/ג'ינג'יים	<p>Nickname for a person (s) with red hair and freckles.</p> <p>However, the gamut of the color <i>gingi</i> ranges from red, orange, blond, gold, to auburn.</p>	
אָדמוני	Ruddy; literally red	
המֶלֶךְ דָּוִד	King David	
עֵשָׂו	Esau, Jacob's twin brother	
היכל	Palace	
המלכות פסא	Royal throne	
שָׂרְבִיט	Scepter	
כֶּתֶר	Crown	
תנ"ך	<p>Torah (the five Books of Moses), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings)</p>	