



זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְיָ נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בּוֹ

Zeh Hayom Asah Adonai, Nagila V'nismicha Bo

This is the day God has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it

The *pasuk* (verse) on this poster comes from *Tehillim* (Psalms) 118:24. The entire *Tehillim* is traditionally included in *Hallel*, which is said on special occasions throughout the year (specifically on holidays and *Rosh Chodesh*). In *Hallel*, *Tehillim* 118 is divided into five sections; and “*Zeh Hayom*” is the last line of the middle section.



Your Multilayered Life and the Creative Process

Share the [slideshow](#) of the artwork in progress that the artist has provided. Point out that the original artwork for this poster is a collage made up of many elements (cut papers, acrylic paints, India ink) layered together. As a class, discuss the steps that went into the creation of the work. Choose one of the following two activities to encourage the creative process in students.

1. Ask students how a day is like a collage. Why do you think the artist may have chosen to use collage art to represent this verse? What elements would you want to include if you were representing your day to someone who knew nothing about you?

Students create their own multilayer art. 1) Using a white piece of 11x14 or legal paper, students draw or watercolor a beautiful day. 2) Students cut out relevant pictures from magazines — maybe they play baseball on Mondays and have piano lessons on Tuesdays, etc. — and collage these onto the first picture. 3) With a third medium such as colored construction paper, foil, tissue paper, transparency paper, etc., students create something God made and cover an element or elements of their work with this. Encourage students to incorporate verse 118:24 into their work.

Display artwork in school-wide or classroom-wide exhibition. Consider having students write commentaries about their works and ask them to include where, if anywhere, they can see God apparent or hidden in their days.

2. Choose a one-sentence text the class is currently studying or one sentence of a larger text. Ask students how they might illustrate that text. Would it be made with one medium or more? What type of material would be used? Would it be layered and textured or one dimensional?

Go back to the first picture the artist provided, the plan or storyboard for her work. Distribute blank white paper and invite the students to create a story board for the text that the class is studying.



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The Attitude of Gratitude

The statement "This is the day that God has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" is a statement of gratitude.

Create a gratitude list: Have each student write the verse at the top of a sheet of paper and list as many things that they are grateful for as possible.

Make a class-wide gratitude paper chain: Cut small strips of construction paper as you might if you were making paper chains for Sukkot. On each strip, have students write down one thing for which they are grateful. Connect the strips together in a chain and hang them in the classroom. Keep strips of paper, pens, and tape or staplers out on a desk or bookcase so that students can add to this chain week after week. Consider adding to the chain each week as a ritual at the beginning or ending of class.

Count your Blessings

Look at links between this text and prayers the class is studying. For instance, a discussion on the importance of gratitude as it relates to *Birkot Hashachar* (the morning blessings that precede *Shacharit*): Why is it important for us to recognize our daily blessings? Use [these resources](#) at JTeach.org to help students count their blessings.

Adopt a Weekly Motto

On the first day of class, introduce the idea of the words on the poster. Let the students know that this is going to be the class motto for the day. Solicit ideas for how you might live by the motto during the time class is in session.

Assign a different student to bring in a motto each week. Write it on a strip of paper that can be tacked up so that there is a record at the end of the year. Solicit ideas for how they might live by this motto in addition to the ones that have gone before it. At the end of the year, distribute a collection of the mottos as a way of remembering the year.

Touchstones

There is a well-known Chasidic story told about Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Przysucha. Rabbi Simcha Bunim was known for carrying two pieces of paper, one in each of his two pockets. One read, "I am but dust and ashes," and the other, "The whole world was created for me." It is said that, when he was feeling overly confident, he would take out the first piece of paper and remind himself to strive for humility and that, when he was feeling that he was of little worth, he would take out the other and be reminded of his place in creation. Tell the story.



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Ask students if they can think of situations in which it would be helpful for them to carry around, or look at, each of those pieces of paper. Invite them to share. Invite the class to brainstorm reasons why you might want to carry something that says: "This is the day that God has made; rejoice and be glad in it." Write this list on the board. Ask students what, if anything, should go in the other pocket.

Students make a touchstone for remembering the verse. Some suggestions for materials include: small pieces of fabric and fabric markers, small flat stones and permanent markers, Shrinky Dinks. Consider getting something pre-printed to share with the class as a reminder or end-of-year gift, such as pencils, water bottles, carabiners, or personalized rubber bracelets.

Personalize Your Space

Hold a short discussion with students about what the verse means, soliciting input from students. Give each student a card with the phrase printed on it in English and Hebrew. Instruct students to write five to ten words or phrases that the phrase calls to mind. Give students a large piece of paper (11x14 or 11x17) with the text on it in Hebrew and English (template available for download) as well as pencils, pens, markers, paint, etc. Based on the words on their cards, have them create their own illustrations. Laminate these illustrations, so students can personalize their own spaces.

Musical Midrash

Tehillim were originally meant to be sung. Sometimes musicians use verses from the *Tanakh* as a basis for their own songs; the songs in [this Blendspace](#) use *Tehillim* 118:24. Students listen to one or more of the songs (either the whole song or a snippet). What are the different emotions that the music conveys? How does the music affect your understanding of the verse? What do you think might have led the songwriters to interpret the verse in the ways that they did?

Produce a Music Video

Listen to [this version](#) sung by the students of the Rashi School in Dedham, MA. Ask students how they might illustrate this song. Students use traditional media in conjunction with a video editing app to create their own class video for the song.

Read a Book

Check out one or more of the books from JTeach.org's "Psalms Bibliography," which can be found in [this Blendspace](#). Ask students how they understand *Tehillim* 118 differently after reading the book(s). What themes from *Tehillim* 118 would you want to include in your own writings?



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Nurture Your Inner Poet

Alicia Ostriker, an American poet known for her writing on both Jewish and feminist themes, writes, "If the Psalms aren't poetry, they're useless."

Have students connect the verse from *Tehillim* 118 to poetry. Here are a number of poems by liturgist Alden Solovy. Choose one or more of these to read as a class. Ask students how the poem relates to the verse.

- ["Cry No More"](#)
- ["Rejoice"](#)
- ["Quick Prayer of Joy"](#)

After reading the poem(s) consider having students try their hand at writing poetry based on the theme of the poster.