

## Come Dance With Me: A Purim Story in Song

### Topic

Hebrew, Purim

### Grade Level(s):

K – 3<sup>rd</sup>

### Big Ideas

Purim is a joyful holiday that invites everyone to take part.

### Learning Targets

Students will:

1. Experience Purim through dance and movement
2. Associate particular movements with song lyrics to learn the Hebrew words to the song “*Leitzan Katan Nechmad*”
3. Practice including others in dance while connecting the Purim themes of joy and inclusivity

### Materials / Technology Needed

- [“Leitzan Katan Nechmad”](#) Song
- Instruments such as hand drums, tambourines, rhythm sticks, small hand bells, maracas, shakers, or wood blocks. If you don’t have instruments, you can create them or use Purim noisemakers.
- [Making Paper Clown Puppets](#) - scroll down until you find Making Paper Clown Puppets
- [Cut-Out of of Paper Clown Puppet](#)
- Plastic noses and colorful hats

### Prepare in Advance

Print pictures provided on page 5.

Watch and learn “*Leitzan Katan Nechmad*.”

Make sure you have enough space for learners to participate in a small parade around the room.

### Relevant Vocabulary

ליצן/ליצנים (Leitzan/Leitzanim)	Clown/clowns
קטן (Katan)	Small, Little
נחמד (Nechmad)	Cute
רוקד (Roked)	Dances
עם כל אחד (Im Kol Echad)	With everyone
אולי (Ulai)	Maybe, perhaps
תהלים (Tehillim)	Book of the Bible
מגילת אסתר (Megillat Esther)	The Book of Esther
משלוח מנות (Mishloah Manot)	Giving Food to Friends
מתנות לאביונים (Matanot l'Evyonim)	Giving Gifts to the Poor

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### Background for Teachers

*Leitzan Katan Nechmad* is a well-known Israeli children's song written by Sarah Levi-Tanai (1910-2005), a pioneering Israeli artist who believed that music, movement, and storytelling could help children feel joy, belonging, and connection. She wrote many songs for young children that are still loved in Israeli classrooms today.

*Leitzanim* have a special place in Purim celebrations. Purim is a holiday of joy, laughter, and turning the ordinary upside down—people wear costumes, act silly, and celebrate together.

In Jewish tradition, laughter and play are not just for fun; they help build community and remind us that even after difficult times, joy can return (see for example [Tehillim 126:2](#) and [Tractate Ta'anit 22a](#)). This is exactly what happens in the Purim story, when fear turns into celebration ([Megillat Esther 8:15 – 17](#)), a celebration that is communal and centered on connection and shared experience. *Mishloach Manot* and *Matanot l'Evyonim* require interaction among members of the community; and the Purim meal and reading the megillah are typically experienced with others.

The song *Leitzan Katan Nechmad* fits perfectly with Purim because its message is about inclusion and connection. *Haleitzan* dances with everyone and invites others to join, just as Purim invites every person—children and adults alike—to take part in the celebration. Singing and moving together allows young learners to experience Purim not just as a story, but as a feeling of happiness, togetherness, and shared celebration.

Using this song during Purim will help children learn about joy, kindness, and welcoming others through music and dance.

### Trigger

Sitting in a circle, show learners a picture of a lonely *leitzan* and ask: “What do you think this clown wants?” Answers should gravitate towards the clown wanting company, or wanting to stand up and move. Then show a picture of the clown with children dancing together and ask: “How does it feel when someone asks you to join in?” Invite one child to dance with you by saying: “Won't you dance with me?” Dance with the child for a few seconds. Then say “this clown—in Hebrew, *leitzan*—reminds me of an upcoming Jewish holiday.” Learners should shout the name of the holiday. If they don't know it, tell them that it reminds you of the holiday of Purim, which is a joyous holiday on which everyone gets invited and is welcome to join in the celebration.

### Description of Activities

- 1) Play the song *Leitzan Katan Nechmad* for a few seconds without explanation. Ask learners, “What do you hear? Does this music make you want to move?” Then introduce the *leitzan* who likes to play *im kol echad*—with everyone—just like on Purim. Stress that we include everyone in the Purim celebration.

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- 2) Teach “*Leitzan Katan Nechmad*” slowly. Sing the song once or twice using expressive gestures (for example: make a motion with your hand to indicate a small clown when singing *leitzan katan*, dance to the word *roked*, and point to a child when singing *ulai tirkod iti?*)
- 3) Break the song into 4 short lines. For example teacher sings: *leitzan katan nechmad*, and children repeat the phrase (If too difficult, have children repeat after each word). By hearing and repeating the song, children will build memory. Repeat each chunk 2-3 times before moving into the next chunk. Then, put two chunks together until learners are ready to repeat the entire song.
- 4) Pair each phrase with a movement. For example:
  - a) *Leitzan katan nechmad*: flap hands like a “nice” clown and make your body small,
  - b) *Roked im kol echad*: spin and place and point at each child in the class,
  - c) *Ulai tirkod iti?*: reach out to one child by extending your hand as if to invite him/her to dance.
- 5) Repeat the song several times using different tempos (slow, fast, faster) and voice volumes (loud, whisper, regular voice) and repeating the motions.
- 6) Distribute plastic noses and colorful hats and make a parade with children marching around the room singing the song. (Make sure there is enough room for children to move freely.) During the last line, “*ulai tirkod iti,*” ask children to dance with the person next to them.
- 7) Play “Sing and Freeze.” Start singing (or play the recording) of “*Leitzan Katan Nechmad*” and invite everyone to dance like happy *leitzanim*. Pause the song suddenly. When the song pauses, all learners freeze in their poses like *leitzanim* statues. After a few seconds, start the song again and let them continue dancing. Add variations, for example, freeze like a silly *leitzan*, or like a *leitzan katan*, or a *leitzan* with a big smile.
- 8) Distribute musical instruments and have learners “play” or bang along on certain words or certain beats.
- 9) Distribute the craft materials and guide learners on how to create a paper clown puppet, which will be a small *leitzan*. Play the song in the background as they work. Learners can create the puppets and give them to people they would like to invite to dance with the class during Purim, turning the idea of invitation into real action.
- 10) Ask learners who can we invite to dance on Purim? Possible answers include the entire school, the entire community, the characters in the Megillah, etc.

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### 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***

- Show the pictures of a *leitzan* alone and a *leitzan* dancing with everyone. Ask learners to point to the pictures as they listen to the song.
- Hum and move—show learners how to hum to the song. Ask them to hum along. After a few rounds, ask them to hum and add the words *leitzan* and *roked*.

#### ***For learners who need extension opportunities***

- Ask learners to create one or two more lines to the song (they can add it in English).
- Using words or emojis (or both), describe how the *leitzan* feels when dancing with everyone.

## *Come Dance With Me: A Purim Story in Song*

Lonely Clown



Clown Dancing with Children

