

Gijigijigaaneshiinh (Chickadee)

*Maajii-Ojibwemowag (They Begin to Speak Ojibwe) – ANA Language Project
Teacher/Caregiver Supplemental Document*

The Story of Mashkiigwaatig and Gijigijigaaneshiinh *From Ojibwe story teller Ann M. Dunn*

Every year, at the beginning of dagwaagin (fall), mashkiigwaatig (tamarack tree) loses its needles and does not regain them until ziiigwan (spring). That was not always the case.

Long ago, mashkiigwaatig used to keep its needles all year and was always green, like wenda-zhingwaak (red pine). The Ojibwe say its beautiful green needles graced the woodlands all through the long winter.

One day during a terrible storm, Gijigijigaaneshiinh was injured. It was so cold he was near death. The little bineshii struggled through the blowing snow until he stood at the foot of the tall mashkiigwaatig.

"Please drop some of your lower branches to shelter me from the storm," Gijigijigaaneshiinh cried.

"I want to live!"

"I will not," Mashkiigwaatig

quickly replied. "I did not grow big beautiful branches to break them off for you. I'm sorry, but I prefer to keep my fine form."

Distraught, Gijigijigaaneshiinh pulled his small battered body to the foot of the tall wenda-zhingwaak and repeated his pleas for protection.

Wenda-zhingwaak pitied Gijigijigaaneshiinh and quickly dropped enough branches to shelter the little bineshii.

Gichi-Manidoo (Great Spirit/Creator) saw what happened and said to Wenda-zhingwaak, "From this day you will always drop your lower branches to remind others that you paid a high price so a small bineshii could live."

When Mashkiigwaatig heard this, he was glad he had not dropped any of his branches.

"Now," he thought. "I will keep my fine form."

"Yes Mashkiigwaatig,"

Gichi-Manidoo said, "you will keep your fine form. But from this day, your needles will begin to turn brown, then they will fall off. Soon you will die and be forgotten."

Mashkiigwaatig wept. "The punishment is too harsh," he cried.

Gijigijigaaneshiinh had crept out from under the red-pine branches lying on the snow. He pitied Mashkiigwaatig.

"Oh Gichi-Manidoo," Gijigijigaaneshiinh prayed. "Please don't let Mashkiigwaatig die and be forgotten."

"Very well," Gichi-Manidoo said to the little bineshii.

Then turning to Mashkiigwaatig, Gichi-Manidoo added, "You will not die and be forgotten. But every autumn, your fine green needles will turn brown and fall off. Then you will stand naked in the forest all winter, as a reminder to others that it is always better to be kind and merciful than it is to be vain and selfish."



Giwednong Set: Gijigijigaaneshiinh Book Ojibwe Language Word List

- **Gijigijigaaneshiinyag** – chickadees
- **Ajidamoo**– squirrel
- **Gigizhebaa**– breakfast
- **Wiisiniwag**– they eat
- **Daki**– cold, cool
- **Ayaa**- it is
- **Noongom**– today, now
- **Gaazhige**– s/he is a greedy eater, gluttonous
- **A'aw**– That
- **Gii-kidaanawed**- s/he ate everything up
- **Gii-ani-nishkaadiziwag**– they are getting mad
- **Agiw**– those
- **Nishkenim**– feel angry at
- **Geget**– sure, certainly, really, indeed
- **Diindisi**– blue jay
- **Daazhim**– talk, gossip about



Different Types of Gijigijigaaneshiinyag

Did you know there are different colored gijigijigaaneshiinyag found throughout Turtle Island?



Black-capped gijigijigaaneshiinh is the one featured in the story. It can be found in Canada and the northern U.S.



Mountain gijigijigaaneshiinh resides in coniferous forests in New Mexico, Arizona, and the Rocky Mountain region. They have more of a grey tone.



Chestnut-backed gijigijigaaneshiinh is found in the Pacific Northwest, western Canada and southern Alaska. Its back is chestnut colored.



Yellow gijigijigaaneshiinh is often confused for a aginjibagwesi (goldfinch) because of its yellow feathers. They are found all over Canada and the northern U.S.

How to get gijigijigaaneshiinyag in your yard:

If you want to try and see some gijigijigaaneshiinyag in your yard, there are a few ways to attract them. One sure way to lure them in is with a bird feeder, which you can fill with:

- Safflower seeds
- Nyjer seeds
- Peanuts
- Suet
- Peanut butter
- Black oil sunflower seeds
- Pecans
- Walnuts
- Meal worms



Another great way to get gijigijigaaneshiinyag in your yard is to put out a **birdbath**. These little bineshiiwag don't get too much water in their diet as they get so busy foraging and catching food. They also like to bathe in water from time to time. Putting out a birdbath will attract gijigijigaaneshiinyag to come drink some refreshments and get a good bath in as well. Just make sure the bath is nice and shallow and not too deep.



Boreal gijigijigaaneshiinh prefers the cold climate of Canada but sometimes resides in the northern U.S. as well. Its feathers have a rust color and dusty tone to it. This little bineshiiwag is slower and tinier than the black-capped gijigijigaaneshiinh.

Extra Resources:

More facts on gijigijigaaneshiinyag

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-capped_Chickadee/overview

<https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Birds/Black-Capped-Chickadee>

Giiwedinong Set: Gijigijigaaneshiinh Book Ojibwe Language Word List Continued

- **Gaaskanazo-** s/he whispers
- **Mangiwane-** s/he carries a big pack
- **Asanjigowag-** they stash, store something
- **Wiisiniwin-** food
- **Gaazo-** s/he hides
- **Ogazootawaawaan-** they hide from
- **Gimoojimiijimewag-** they steal food
- **Waanikewag-** they dig a hole or trench
- **Ingiw-** those
- **Bibaagi-** s/he shouts
- **Maadademo-** s/he starts to cry
- **Agooziwag-** they are perched up on something
- **Imaa-** there
- **Ganawenindiwag-** they take care of each other
- **Maada'oonidiwag-** they share with each other
- **Mii iw-** that's it



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