



At a Glance: Brightening Days Out-of-school time (grades 4-5)

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet provides an overview of the ThinkGive® Brightening Days out-of-school time (OST) program, designed for students in grades 4-5. Through the program, students explore the concepts of kindness and empathy, learning how small, thoughtful actions can brighten both their days and the lives of others. A key focus of the program is to build bravery and encourage students to step out of their comfort zones to make a positive impact. As the program progresses, students apply these skills to foster positive change within their classrooms and groups, ultimately extending their efforts to their broader communities.

Included in this packet:

- Scope + Sequence (14 lessons)
- Sample Lesson Plan (Give to Someone You Care About: Give to a Friend)
- Program Overview + Impact

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Questions? info@thinkgiveproject.org

We look forward to connecting with you!
- The ThinkGive Team



Scope + Sequence: Brightening Days (OST) (ThinkGive® Elementary, grades 4-5)

Students explore kindness and empathy, examining how small actions can brighten both their days and those of others.

The program emphasizes the bravery it takes to step into one's courage zone and take action that positively impacts yourself and others.

As the program progresses, students cultivate positive change within their classrooms and groups, extending their efforts to benefit their broader communities.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Take Action "Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date]..."	SEL Core Competencies
Introduction	This lesson introduces students to the ThinkGive Project, highlighting the essential role of kindness and empathy in fostering meaningful connections. Through a visualization activity that equates kindness with brightness, students explore the powerful impact of positive actions. They then create a paper sun and sunbeams, each symbolizing acts of kindness that can brighten someone's day. By the end of the lesson, students will have a deeper understanding of how their words and actions can ignite positive change in their world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What constitutes a "gift"? - How important is empathy in taking meaningful action? - Everyone experiences cloudy days, but there are many actions we can take to brighten our skies. 	<i>Notice positive actions (sunbeams) in our group/school, your family, sports team, etc. Notice how these positive actions make you feel. Notice how others react.</i>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Social-awareness: Empathy Social awareness: Perspective-taking
Give to Yourself: Honoring Your Body's Needs	In this lesson, students explore how they care for their bodies and discuss the importance of honoring their physical needs through self-care. They explore how taking care of their physical health positively affects their emotional well-being and influences their interactions with others. Finally, they participate in a mindfulness meditation exercise and reflect on positive habits they can cultivate to improve their overall well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can they brighten their days by honoring their body's needs? - How does caring for their physical selves affect their emotions? - How caring for their physical selves enables them to care for others. 	<i>Take a positive action to care for your physical self and honor your body's needs. Practice being true to yourself by tuning in and responding to what your body is asking for.</i>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Self-awareness: Authenticity Self-management: Self-regulation
Give to Yourself: Finding Sunshine Within	Students deepen their understanding of self-care by exploring the power of positive self-talk as a tool for emotional well-being. They learn to identify and practice positive self-talk and engage in a worksheet and group activity where they clear the clouds from their skies using encouraging words and thoughts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to find sunshine within themselves. - What is the power of positive and negative self-talk? - How caring for their emotional selves enables them to care for others. 	<i>Practice finding sunshine from within by speaking positive self-talk to yourself.</i>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Self-awareness: Authenticity Self-awareness: Growth mindset
Give to Someone You Care About: Give to Your Inner Circle	In this lesson, students reflect on the individuals who form their inner circle—family members, caregivers, parents, siblings, and others they care about—and consider how these people support and enrich their lives. To express their gratitude, students create appreciation cards for these important individuals. Additionally, they explore the role of empathy and the significance of valuing their inner circle, recognizing the importance of not taking these relationships for granted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is in their inner circle? - Why is it important to practice empathy with those in their inner circle? - How can they show appreciation for those in our inner circle and avoid taking them for granted? 	<i>Show appreciation for someone in your inner circle. Make an Appreciation Card or choose another meaningful way to express gratitude.</i>	Social awareness: Gratitude Social awareness: Interconnectedness Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building
Give to Someone You Care About: Give to a Friend	In this lesson, students deepen their understanding of relationships with those they care about. They reflect on their friendships, identify the key qualities of a good friend, and explore how empathy strengthens these bonds. To reinforce these concepts, students participate in a role-playing activity where they practice using empathy to lift a friend's spirits, especially when they're having a tough day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The friendships they have developed. - What are the qualities of good friends? - How practicing empathy can strengthen their friendships. 	<i>Notice opportunities to take a small (and authentic) action to impact a friend in class, at school, or in another community. Remember, small is all!</i>	Social awareness: Perspective-taking Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Relationship-building

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Give to Community: Celebrating Diversity	Students gain an understanding of the many communities they are a part of and their impact on those communities. Focus on how differences/diversity unify and strengthen communities and how we can celebrate diversity by supporting and uplifting others. The ThinkGive Three focus is on being Brave, as sometimes we must be brave to recognize and celebrate the diversity around us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What communities do they belong to? - The diversity in their communities and how that diversity strengthens them. - How can they celebrate diversity in their communities? 	<i>Celebrate the diversity in one of your communities. You can explore a culture different from your own by trying new food, reading a book by an author with a different background, or finding another meaningful way.</i>	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Social awareness: Interconnectedness Responsible decision-making: Curiosity
Give to Community: Impacting Your Community	Students reflect on the communities they are part of and brainstorm meaningful ways to make a positive impact. They then engage in a "snowball" activity, illustrating how individual actions can create a ripple effect, inspiring others to contribute and fostering collective change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can they create meaningful, positive change within their communities? - What is the collective power of individual actions to drive broader impact? - How can their behavior inspire and motivate others to take action? 	<i>Take a positive action to impact one of your communities. Your action can support an individual, a group, or a place.</i>	Social awareness: Empathy Social awareness: Interconnectedness Self-management: Personal agency
Give Your Gratitude: Showing Gratitude to Others	Students explore the importance of being grateful and showing gratitude to others and consider who and what they are thankful for. Guide students to understand that gratitude begins with recognizing all they appreciate and how gratitude leads to empathy and compassion for others. The ThinkGive Three focuses on being True to ensure their action feels authentic to who they are and meaningful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why is having and showing gratitude important? - What is the impact of gratitude on the giver and the receiver? - How practicing gratitude makes us more empathetic. 	<i>Being and feeling grateful is important, but showing gratitude is just as important. Choose someone in your group/school or larger community and ensure they know you appreciate them. Your gift of gratitude will brighten someone's day.</i>	Social awareness: Gratitude Relationship skills: Relationship-building Social awareness: Interconnectedness
Give Your Gratitude: Gratitude for Challenges	Guide students in exploring the concept of a growth mindset by asking them to reflect on moments when they experienced personal growth through overcoming challenges. Then, encourage them to brainstorm ways to express gratitude to someone who supported them during a challenging time, ultimately leading to a rewarding outcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to look at challenging moments as opportunities for growth. - What is a growth mindset? - Sometimes, the support of others in challenging moments is crucial in helping you navigate difficulties and learn. 	<i>Express gratitude to someone who has supported you through a challenging moment—someone whose encouragement or presence helped you navigate that challenge and become who you are today.</i>	Self-awareness: Growth mindset Social awareness: Gratitude Relationship skills: Interdependence
Give to the Environment: The More You Know, the More You Can Help	In this lesson, students engage with the environment through an interactive trivia activity. This fun and informative exercise serves as a launchpad for deeper discussions on how knowledge can empower us to protect and preserve the natural world. Students reflect on the aspects of nature that resonate most with them, sparking curiosity about the areas they want to explore and learn more about.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What makes up the environment? - Educating ourselves about nature is the first step towards helping preserve the environment. - What are they curious about regarding the environment? 	<i>Explore and learn something new about the Earth—whether about animals, plants, water, or any other aspect of the environment. The more you discover, the better equipped you'll be to take action to help protect our planet!</i>	Self-management: Goal-setting Responsible decision-making: Curiosity Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking
Give to the Environment: Direct Action	This lesson focuses on using our understanding of the environment to take meaningful action. After exploring various environmental challenges, students choose one to address. They brainstorm solutions through either a creative acting activity or writing and reflect on how even small actions can positively impact the planet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What aspect of the environment do they want to help? - What are some ways to take action for the environment? - How can even small actions have a significant impact on our planet? 	<i>Choose a way to help the environment and take action!</i>	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Self-management: Risk-taking Responsible decision-making: Curiosity

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Expand Your Courage Zone: Give Bravely	In this lesson, students explore the courage required to take actions that positively impact others. They participate in the Courage Spectrogram activity, where they evaluate the level of courage needed in various scenarios. Additionally, they listen to author George Saunders reflect on a childhood opportunity for kindness that he missed and now regrets. The lesson emphasizes that, like any new skill, taking brave and positive actions helps build courage over time, making it easier and more natural to act in ways that benefit others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Courage looks different for everyone. - Taking action outside your comfort zone creates opportunities for connection. - Stepping beyond your comfort zone can lead to personal growth. 	<p><i>Challenge yourself to step further into your courage zone. Take an action that feels a little intimidating to brighten someone's day—offer a kind word, lend a hand, or apologize for a mistake. Remember, bravery looks different for everyone, and only you know what feels brave for you!</i></p>	<p>Relationship skills: Relationship-building Social awareness: Interconnectedness Self-management: Risk-taking</p>
Expand Your Courage Zone: Connect With Someone New	This lesson encourages students to step into their courage zone by connecting with someone they haven't interacted with before. They reflect on people they haven't connected with in their communities and explore the value of stepping out of their comfort zones. The idea of "safe" versus "unsafe" strangers can be intimidating, so you may choose to discuss safe and unsafe spaces instead. The main goal is to foster bravery and encourage students to take the courageous step of engaging with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of their social surroundings can help them notice others in their communities who might need connection. - It takes courage to reach out and make positive connections, especially with people they don't know. - Small actions matter! Even a simple gesture toward someone they haven't connected with can have a big impact, even if they don't always see the results. 	<p><i>Step further into your courage zone by taking an action to connect with someone new. Whether it's a simple gesture or a longer conversation, reach out to someone you haven't interacted with yet and make a positive impact on their day. Your effort to connect can make a difference!</i></p>	<p>Relationship skills: Relationship-building Self-management: Risk-taking Responsible decision-making: Curiosity</p>
Wrap Up	This lesson celebrates students' individual and collective impact and develops ways to advance their ThinkGive learnings. Students record and share their most memorable actions, reflect on why ThinkGive matters, and consider how they can keep ThinkGive going. Highlight the scope of the impact the group has made on others as individuals and collectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How ThinkGive has deepened their understanding of the impact of positive actions. - The ways they have brightened others' days through their actions. - How can they continue to carry forward the spirit of ThinkGive, individually and as a group? 	<p><i>Every kind word, thoughtful gesture, and brave action can light up someone's world. Now that ThinkGive is ending, let's continue to brighten the skies around us, spreading light and kindness wherever we go.</i></p>	<p>Self-awareness: Confidence Social awareness: Empathy Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking</p>

Give to Someone You Care About: Give to a Friend



grades: 4-5



40 minutes

“Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” – Marcel Proust

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students deepen their understanding of relationships with those they care about. They reflect on their friendships, identify the key qualities of a good friend, and explore how empathy strengthens these bonds. To reinforce these concepts, students participate in a role-playing activity where they practice using empathy to lift a friend's spirits, especially when they're having a tough day.

Students will Examine

- The friendships they have developed.
- What are the qualities of good friends?
- How practicing empathy can strengthen their friendships.

Pre-Activity Prep

- Prepare markers and paper plates (or paper strips) (1/student) (THINK.GIVE section).
- Print and cut out Beaming Bonds Scenarios ([PDF](#)) (1 worksheet/group, or more depending on number of students) (THINK.GIVE section).
- (Optional) Print or digitally share an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) (1/student) (CONNECT + CLOSE section).



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals
Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#))
ThinkGive Warm-up Activities ([PDF](#))
Quote Image ([PDF](#))
Paper plates
Markers
Beaming Bonds Scenarios ([PDF](#))
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Give to a Friend](#)
Video: [The Animal Odd Couple](#) (2:44)
(Digging Deeper) Video: [How Friendship Affects Your Brain](#) (4:07)

WARM-UP ACTIVITY

Extreme Rock, Paper, Scissors

Students form partners and play a round of Rock, Paper, Scissors. The player who loses becomes the winner's cheerleader. Winners from each pair then find another winner to compete against in the next round; their cheerleaders cheer them on. Continue this process, with each round's



TEACHER TIP

If time allows, start the lesson with a Warm-Up Activity to help your students connect, especially if new participants are joining during the program.

losers joining the cheerleading squads. In the final round, the last two remaining players face off, each backed by a large group of cheerleaders. The final winner receives a big cheer from everyone. Repeat the game as time allows.

Refer to the ThinkGive Warm-up Activities ([PDF](#)) for other ideas.

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Students volunteer to share aloud.

Ask: What actions did you take to show appreciation for a member of your inner circle? Did you deliver your Appreciation Card? If so, how did that person react?

★ TEACHER TIP

If students feel dissatisfied with their actions or have yet to act, remind them that small, consistent actions help develop kindness muscles (ThinkGive Three), so keep trying!

OPEN

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Quote/Image

Display the Image ([PDF](#)) and/or read the quote or invite a student to read it (see slides): “Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” – Marcel Proust

Ask: What does this image/quote mean to you?

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 20–25 minutes

Defining and Valuing Friends

Explain: Friends are people with whom we share a special bond, and because of that, we care about their feelings and well-being. Just as our friends can make us happy by showing they care, we must do the same for them. One way to strengthen our friendships is by practicing empathy –listening to and understanding how our friends feel. By showing that we value their friendship and being there for them, we can brighten their day and strengthen our connection.

★ TEACHER TIP

If needed, brainstorm before students choose words that describe a friend. Sample words include loyal, supportive, reliable, accepting, caring, trustworthy, kind, empathetic, encouraging, understanding, fun, honest, respectful, and generous.

Give each student a paper plate and a marker. Students think of all their friends—in class, at school, and in other communities (e.g., sports teams, clubs, religious community, etc.)—and write a word in large letters that they feel embodies the most important quality of a good friend (e.g., honest, funny, kind, empathetic, trustworthy).

NOTE: Instead of plates, you could use paper strips and build a friendship chain. You could also have students reflect in their ThinkGive Journals.

Students share their words with the class and explain their choices. Display the plates in the room where everyone can see them.

Discuss:

- What do you notice about the words we chose?
- Why are friends important?
- Why is empathy important in a friendship? How does empathy help prevent us from taking a friend for granted?
- How can you be a good friend? What are some things you can do to brighten a friend's day?

Activity: Beaming Bonds

Assign pairs or allow students to choose a partner. Hand out the Beaming Bonds Scenarios ([PDF](#)) (1/pair) (different pairs can receive the same scenario). Students take turns role-playing, with one person acting out the scenario and the other responding with empathy and kindness. After the first round, they switch roles and replay the scenario, this time choosing new words or actions to demonstrate empathy differently.

After a few rounds of role-play, invite volunteers to re-enact their scenarios for the class. As a group, discuss and highlight the examples of empathy and kindness that stood out during the performances. Encourage students to reflect on how these actions made a difference in the scenario.

Discuss:

- How did it feel to play each role—both experiencing a cloudy day and offering support?
- What words or phrases stood out to you as helpful in brightening a friend's day?
- What challenges, if any, did you encounter when trying to show empathy?

DIGGING DEEPER

Watch: [How Friendship Affects Your Brain](#) (4:07). This video explains how adolescent friendships influence brain development and how your brain responds to time spent with friends.



VOCAB

Empathy: noun; the ability to understand and share the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of others.



TEACHER TIP

Model a scenario to show students what practicing empathy can look like.



TEACHER TIP

Remind students that while it's not their responsibility to fix a friend's day, a small act of kindness can sometimes have a significant impact. Even a simple gesture can help brighten a friend's mood and show them they're cared for.

Discuss:

- The “ventral striatum” part of your brain helps you feel happy when you're with friends. Can you think of a time when you felt excited to spend time with a friend? Do you often look forward to hanging out with friends?
- What is the “Theory of Mind”? (see minute 2:20)
- Have you ever felt completely in sync with a friend? What was the situation, and how did it make you feel?

Tech Option

Watch: [The Animal Odd Couple](#) (2:44). This video is about a unique friendship between two animals named Bella and Tara. As students watch, encourage them to think about what these animals can teach us about friendship.

Discuss:

- What gifts do Bella and Tara give each other?
- Do you think Bella and Tara exhibit empathy for each other? If so, how?
- What can we learn about friendship from Bella and Tara?
- How does this friendship impact the humans at the nature preserve?

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date], notice opportunities to take a small (and authentic) action to impact a friend in class, at school, or in another community. Remember, small is all!

Things to Consider

- The ThinkGive Three's focus is on small. Small actions can go a long way in strengthening a friendship!
- Use empathy to consider what a friend wants, needs, or enjoys.
- What action can you take that might brighten a friend's sky?

Closing Quote

Use this quote and Image ([PDF](#)) to close out the lesson. The reflective questions could serve as an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)).

“Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” – Marcel Proust

Discuss:

- What does this quote mean to you now?
 - How does this quote connect to the lesson?
-

★ THINKGIVE THREE

1. True: be authentic
2. Small: small is all
3. Brave: step into your courage zone

★ CONNECTION

Marcel Proust (1871–1922) was a French novelist who wrote the longest novel, *In Search of Lost Time*. It's almost 4,000 pages and has 1.2 million words. It took him 13 years to write!

Sample Actions

- I sat beside a friend on the bus because they were alone.
- I noticed I've taken a friend for granted. I told him I'm thankful he's a friend.
- My best friend and I are different people. I told them what I like about how different we are.

Student Journal Questions

- Write about a friendship you admire—and what you admire about it.
- What have you learned from your friends? How did you learn those things?
- What actions can you take to develop or strengthen friendships?

Extensions

DO

Friendship Spotlight Game

Use the Friendship Spotlight Game from "Changes In Me: A Puberty and Adolescent Development Resource for Educators" ([PDF](#)) to help students identify positive, warning, and negative signs in friendships. Review the activity description and decide which teaching strategy best suits students. Print the Activity Cards ([PDF](#)) and prepare your room according to your chosen approach.

WATCH

Song: "[You've Got a Friend](#)" (4:30) by James Taylor (see lyrics: [PDF](#)). This song, written by Carole King, is about how friends always help us during hard times.

Discuss:

- What qualities of a friend does James Taylor highlight?
- How does James Taylor care for his friend?

READ/LISTEN

Read-aloud book: [My Two Blankets](#) (4:55) by Irena Kobald and Freya Blackwood. Due to war, a girl nicknamed Cartwheel has moved to a place where she no longer feels like herself, and friendship inspires new ways of speaking, living, and being.

Discuss:

- What do you learn about the narrator? What is her experience?
- Why does she feel so alone?
- What kindness does the girl give the narrator?
- The narrator learns from the girl; what does the girl learn from the narrator?
- How do the girls' blankets connect with her identity?



ThinkGive partners with educators to bring social and emotional learning (SEL) to K-8 youth.

Our mission is to empower youth to take actions that positively impact themselves and others; building character, confidence, and connection. Our programs explore inclusion, identity, empathy, and equity to help youth cultivate self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills.

Why ThinkGive? ---

We emphasize action. Our programs empower youth to take self-directed and authentic actions that positively impact themselves, others, their communities, and the environment.

We increase access to SEL. We engage youth who need access to programs like ours. Over 75% of our partner educators serve under-resourced youth and receive free programming.



Check if your school or organization qualifies for free programming funded by our SEL for Every Child Fund at thinkgiveproject.org/fund

We make an impact. Students overwhelmingly report that after participating in ThinkGive programming, they feel empowered to be a force of good and positively impact their world. Programs develop prosocial skills, including connection (with peers, friends, family, teachers, and community), belonging, confidence, and empowerment.

We are flexible and adaptable. ThinkGive fits into just about any K-8 learning environment. Our programs are adaptable to your schedule, goals, and student needs. They can be taught standalone or complement and enhance broader SEL initiatives.

We are grounded in research. ThinkGive aligns with CASEL's core competencies and state and common core standards.

We provide exceptional support. The ThinkGive team partners with you and provides hands-on support so that you can implement programs effectively.

Why Now?

Youth mental health has deteriorated nationwide, and this crisis is disproportionately impacting under-resourced youth. In May 2023, the Surgeon General declared loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection a new public health epidemic in the United States. Research shows how teaching youth prosocial behavior is directly associated with positive emotional, social, and academic growth.



OUR IMPACT

STUDENTS REPORT...

84%

will be kinder to others

81%

will be a force of good in their schools and communities

71%

are more willing to stand up for what's right

76%

feel more confident to make a positive impact on their world

84% felt more connected with family, **78%** with community, **77%** with friends

EDUCATORS REPORT...

100%

students feel more empowered that they can be agents of change

85%

students seem more inclusive

75%

students seem kinder to each other



“ThinkGive is a revolutionary SEL program that empowers students to immaterially gift kindness. It strengthens their connections to each other and their communities, shapes them as young citizens, and helps them see the impact of their actions.”

– Dana Meyer, educator, Carlisle Public School

“ThinkGive has and will help me be a more considerate, thoughtful, and compassionate person. Knowing the positive effects I can have on a person is truly amazing.”

– 7th grade student