



At a glance: Be the Spark (grades 3–4)

Welcome to ThinkGive!

In this packet, you'll find a complete overview of ThinkGive®'s Be the Spark program, designed for 3rd–4th graders. This program empowers students to ignite kindness and positivity by taking intentional actions that impact themselves and those around them. Centered on the theme of being a spark, students explore how their choices can inspire change in their families, friendships, and communities. As the program unfolds, students showcase their acts of kindness on a spark-filled display, celebrating the ripple effect of their positive impact.

Included in this packet:

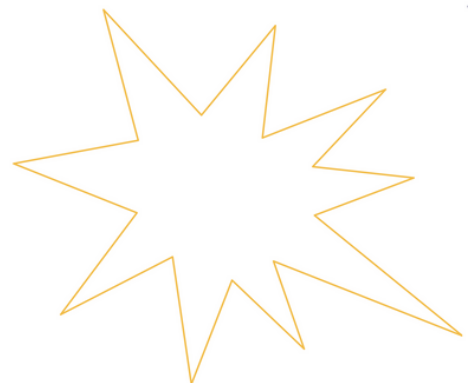
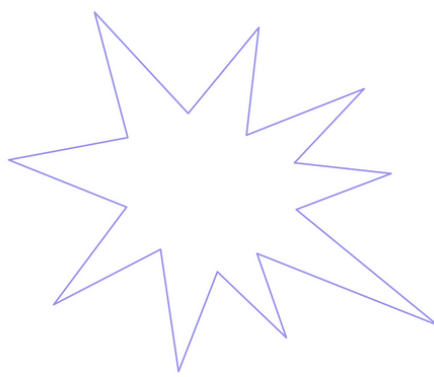
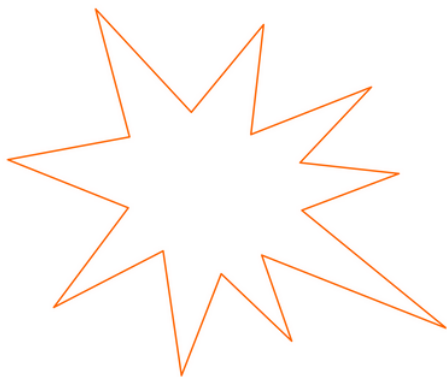
- Scope + Sequence (12 lessons)
- Sample Lesson Plan (Validating Sparks)
- Program Overview + Impact

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Questions? info@thinkgiveproject.org

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



Scope + Sequence: Be the Spark (ThinkGive Elementary, grades 3-4)

Throughout the Be the Spark program, students discover that they have the power to ignite positivity all around them. One spark of kindness can light another—and then another—creating a growing blaze of positive actions. As they explore ways to be kind to themselves and others, students document and celebrate their actions on a spark-filled classroom display.

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. The book <i>A Small Kindness</i> presents the idea that small positive actions, or “sparks,” can have a significant impact by inspiring others. The lesson concludes with a mindfulness visualization exercise that helps cultivate a sense of inner warmth and kindness by focusing on a growing light in the heart, promoting emotional well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the word “spark” connect to ThinkGive? - How can one small action have a significant impact? - Sparks of kindness can be passed from person to person. 	<i>Try to notice sparks of kindness around you. Look for sparks of all sizes. Notice if you are a spark to others. We will share what we saw next time.</i>	Self-awareness: Confidence Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Relationship skills: Interdependence
Be Your Own Spark	Students learn how self-care—caring for their bodies and emotions—is key to caring for others. They explore the power of positive self-talk and discover how forgiving themselves after making mistakes strengthens their minds and bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of self-care. - How can they use positive self-talk when they make a mistake? - How practicing self-forgiveness can strengthen their minds and bodies. 	<i>Use positive self-talk to forgive yourself when you make a mistake. Our ThinkGive Three focuses on being True, so make sure your action fits what YOU need. Spark kindness in yourself!</i>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Self-awareness: Growth mindset Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception
Sparks of Appreciation	Students reflect on what "family" means to them and who is in their family, recognizing that its definition can vary. They then explore the concept of "appreciation" and how we often overlook family members despite their importance. The ThinkGive Three focus is on "Small," encouraging students to express appreciation for their family in simple, meaningful ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the concept of family varies for different people. - It is easy to overlook the many ways family members support them. - How can they take small actions to show appreciation to their family members? 	<i>Notice how your family supports you (even in small ways!), then spark kindness by showing appreciation to a family member.</i>	Self-awareness: Growth mindset Social awareness: Examining norms Social awareness: Perspective-taking
Sustain the Flame	Students explore why friendship is important, identify adjectives that describe a good friend, and discuss ways to support their friends. They learn the concept of a “candle blower-outer” and discover how to keep their friends’ candles burning brightly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of friendship. - Ways to be a supportive friend. - Why it’s important not to be a “candle blower-outer.” 	<i>Be a [the opposite of a candle blower-outer]. Take an action(s) to keep a friend’s flame burning bright!</i>	Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Relationship skills: Interdependence
Let Your Sparks Fly	Students reflect on times and situations when they might need support and identify who they would turn to for help. They learn that the people they seek out form their support network and that they, in turn, are part of others’ networks. Finally, they explore the science behind giving and receiving kindness within their support networks and beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is a support network? - Who is in their support network? - How are they part of other’s support networks? 	<i>Think about people who support you, then take action to care for someone in your support network.</i>	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Social awareness: Perspective-taking Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building
Validating Sparks	Students consider the many emotions they experience each day. They discuss how everyone has emotions, how people’s experiences vary, and how they can validate someone else’s feelings by listening to them. Students then practice active listening with one another, preparing to take action by listening attentively to someone in their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How everyone experiences a wide range of emotions. - How some emotions feel positive while others may feel uncomfortable. - How can they be active listeners and support others’ emotions? 	<i>Practice being an active listener. Pay attention to how your listening affects the other person and how it makes you feel.</i>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Relationship skills: Effective communication Self-management: Self-regulation

A Bridge of Sparks	In this lesson, students use classroom materials or worksheets to build symbolic bridges, filling them with ideas for actions they can take to positively impact someone younger than themselves. After constructing their bridges, students discuss the importance of creating connections between people of different ages. They then watch a read-aloud that provides examples of how to put their ideas into action. Finally, students reflect on the bravery it may take to reach out and support someone younger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The significance of taking action to positively impact someone younger than themselves. - Specific ways they can support and connect with someone younger. - Building a bridge of kindness across age gaps may require courage and bravery. 	<i>Build a bridge of sparks with someone younger than you. Remember, younger children look up to older kids like you, so choose an action that shows them the power of kindness and helps build a positive connection!</i>	Social awareness: Perspective-taking Relationship skills: Effective communication Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building
New People, New Sparks	Students brainstorm who they'd like to get to know better and explore ways to connect through simple gestures and words. They watch a video about a middle school student who holds the door for his classmates each morning—a small but meaningful action. Students then practice getting to know one another by asking questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People they could get to know better. - Actions they can take to positively impact those they don't know well—or at all. - How asking someone about themselves is a caring action. 	<i>Connect with someone you don't know well (or at all) by showing curiosity and kindness.</i>	Relationship skills: Effective communication Self-management: Risk-taking Responsible decision-making: Curiosity
Sparks in Your Community	Students begin by using a Community Map to explore the different communities they belong to. They share their experiences in small groups and learn more about each other's unique communities. Afterward, they participate in a full group discussion about how they can take positive action to impact someone or something within one of their communities, as well as how they can collaborate to create change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The meaning of "community" and what it includes. - The different communities they belong to. - Actions they can take to care for and strengthen their communities. 	<i>Take action to positively impact someone or something in one of your communities. Spark kindness and make a difference!</i>	Relationship skills: Social engagement Relationship skills: Cultural competency Responsible decision-making: Curiosity
Your Words Matter	Students explore the impact of words by reflecting on how different phrases make them feel. They discuss how emotions can be shared or experienced differently by individuals. Finally, they recognize the power of compliments as a positive action and practice giving them to one another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How different words make them feel. - How can emotions vary from person to person? - How can using positive words support and uplift others? 	<i>Compliment someone about a character trait, action, or skill. You can say your positive words aloud or write them on a note.</i>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Relationship skills: Effective communication Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building
Sparks for the Earth	In this lesson, students explore the many ways the Earth cares for them and how they can give back. They watch a read-aloud about a child taking action to protect the Earth in her community. Through a hands-on yarn web activity, students visualize the interconnectedness of all living things and the importance of caring for the Earth. To conclude, students can sign a pledge to be stewards and protectors of the Earth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The many ways the Earth provides for us and sustains life. - All things on Earth—humans, animals, plants, land, water, and air—are interconnected. - What actions can they take to appreciate and give back to the Earth? 	<i>Take action to care for the Earth. The Earth provides us with so much. Let's show her how much we appreciate her!</i>	Social awareness: Gratitude Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Responsible decision-making: Advocacy
Wrap-Up	In this lesson, students reflect on the positive actions they have taken throughout ThinkGive, identifying their favorite spark, their bravest spark, and one key takeaway. They assess their personal growth and the progress of their group. After watching a video of teenagers discussing the meaning of kindness, students consider how their definition of kindness has evolved. Finally, they explore the "So What?" (why ThinkGive matters) and the "Now What?" (how can they continue making a positive impact).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How has their understanding of kindness evolved? - What were their favorite and bravest actions, and what did they learn from them? - How can they continue to carry the spirit of ThinkGive forward? 	<i>Take a moment to appreciate all the small, true, and brave actions you've taken throughout ThinkGive. Every action—no matter how small—sparks kindness and bravery. Let's continue making a difference, one action at a time!</i>	Self-awareness: Confidence Self-management: Goal setting Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking

Validating Sparks



grades: 3-4



45 minutes

“Part of being successful is about asking questions and listening to the answers.”
– Anne Burrell

Lesson Summary

Students consider the many emotions they experience each day. They discuss how everyone has emotions, how people's experiences vary, and how they can validate someone else's feelings by listening to them. Students then practice active listening with one another, preparing to take action by listening attentively to someone in their lives.

Students will Examine

- How everyone experiences a wide range of emotions.
- How some emotions feel positive while others may feel uncomfortable.
- How can they be active listeners and support others' emotions?

Pre-Activity Prep

- (Optional) Send home the ThinkGive@Home: Halfway There! ([PDF](#)) (1/student).
- Print and cut the Spark Template ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (SHARE section).
- Print the Worksheet: My Feelings ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (THINK.GIVE section).
- Print the Worksheet: Feeling + Emotion Words ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (THINK.GIVE section).
- Print and cut the Worksheet: How to be an Active Listener ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (REFLECT section).



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals
Spark Template ([PDF](#))
Quote Image ([PDF](#))
Worksheet: My Feelings ([PDF](#))
Worksheet: Feeling + Emotion Words ([PDF](#))
Worksheet: How to be an Active Listener ([PDF](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Validating Sparks](#)
Read-aloud book: [The Rabbit Listened](#) (3:37)
(Digging Deeper) Video: [Empathetic Listening](#) (1:45)
(Digging Deeper) Read-aloud book: [I'm Sad](#) (2:35)

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Spark Template

Each student writes the action(s) they took since the last ThinkGive lesson to care for someone in their support network on a Spark Template ([PDF](#)).

Encourage neat handwriting and outlining in marker. When ready, they can display their actions on the Spark Bulletin Board.

Small Group Share

Students form small groups and share the action(s) they took to care for someone in their support network and how taking their action(s) made them feel.

OPEN

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Quote/Image

Display the Quote Image ([PDF](#)) and/or read the quote or invite a volunteer to read it (see slides): “Part of being successful is about asking questions and listening to the answers.” – Anne Burrell

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

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 15 minutes

So Many Feelings

Ask: What are “feelings” or “emotions”? Can you name some feelings you know?

Hand out the Worksheets: My Feelings ([PDF](#)) (1/student) and Feeling + Emotion Words ([PDF](#)) (1/student).

Explain: We all experience a wide range of emotions, and they’re all okay! There is no such thing as a “wrong” feeling. Sometimes, we don’t pay much attention to how we feel in the moment. Let’s take a moment to think about how we felt at different times yesterday. For example, how did you feel when you woke up? Write that emotion in a light purple rectangle and draw an emoji to represent how it felt in the circle above. Next, think about how you felt later in the morning. Write that emotion in a new rectangle and illustrate it with another emoji. Continue reflecting on other emotions you felt throughout the day and add them to your worksheet.

As students finish, ask: What other emotions have you experienced? Add these to your worksheet.



VOCAB

Emotion: noun; a reaction in our mind or body to something happening around us, often influencing our thoughts or actions.

Feeling: noun; the physical sensations we experience in our body because of an emotion.



CONNECTION

Read-aloud book: [Pass It On](#) (2:58) by Sophy Henn. This story inspires readers to spread kindness by sharing positive experiences and emotions.

Discuss: What positive emotions have you experienced recently? How can sharing a smile or a laugh make a difference in someone’s day?

Optional Share: In pairs, small groups, or as a class/group, students choose one emotion to act out while others guess what it is.

Discuss:

- What emotions feel good?
- What emotions feel uncomfortable?
- Do we all feel the same emotions when doing similar things? Why might people react differently in the same situation?

DIGGING DEEPER

Watch: I'm Sad (2:35), a read-aloud book by Michael Ian Black. In this story, characters learn that sadness is a normal emotion, that it can feel good to allow ourselves to feel sad, and that everyone has their way of coping and feeling better.

Discuss:

- Why is it important to allow ourselves to feel sad sometimes?
- Can you think of a time when you felt sad and something else, like happy or frustrated? How did you handle it?
- How can we manage feeling multiple emotions at once? What might that look like?

REFLECT

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Active Listening

Watch: The Rabbit Listened (3:37), a read-aloud book by Cori Doerrfeld. In this story, Taylor's block tower gets destroyed. Different animals try to help in various ways, but Taylor only feels better when the rabbit sits quietly and listens.

Discuss:

- How did each animal try to help Taylor?
- If you were Taylor, which animal's helping method would have worked best for you? Why?
- Why was the rabbit's quiet listening the most effective? What does this teach us about the power of simply being there for someone?

Explain: One way to show care for others is by being an active listener, just like the rabbit was for Taylor. Active listening involves giving your full attention to the person speaking and using your body language to show you're engaged. Active listeners validate the speaker's feelings by saying things like, "Tell me more," "That sounds difficult," "Thank you for sharing," or "I'm listening." This approach helps the speaker feel understood and supported.



VOCAB

Active listening: noun; focusing on and understanding what someone is saying, showing them you're genuinely listening.

Validate: verb; acknowledging and respecting another person's feelings, showing their emotions are important.

Empathetic listening: noun; a listening style that goes beyond hearing words, focusing on understanding the speaker's feelings, perspective, and emotions.

Students form pairs (either self-selected or assigned) and practice active listening. Student A asks Student B a prompting question and then practices the corresponding active listening skill. Afterward, they switch roles. Student B asks Student A the same question and listens to their response. When ready, Student A moves on to the next question.

Prompting Questions + Active Listening Skills:

Question: Share a time you felt excited.

Active listening skill: Lean forward and make eye contact with your partner.

Question: Share a time you were surprised.

Active listening skill: Focus on your partner's words; try not to think about anything else.

Question: Describe your favorite food and why you love it.

Active listening skill: Wait until your partner finishes speaking before responding.

Question: Describe a time when you did something challenging.

Active listening skill: Show interest with phrases like, "Tell me more" or "How did that make you feel?"

Question: Share a time you felt nervous.

Active listening skill: Validate your partner's feelings with statements like, "It sounds like that was hard" or "You must have felt frustrated."

Discuss:

- How did your partner make you feel listened to?
- How did you feel when you were listened to?
- Was active listening easy or challenging? Explain why.
- Who outside of school could benefit from your active listening skills?

Hand out the Worksheet: How to be an Active Listener ([PDF](#)) (1/student). Students glue them into their ThinkGive Journals for future reference.

DIGGING DEEPER

Watch: [Empathetic Listening](#) (1:45). This clip from Inside Out shows how empathetic listening—focusing on understanding the speaker's emotions—can be more helpful than trying to "cheer them up," especially when someone is feeling sad.

Discuss:

- Which character's response to Bing Bong felt more helpful? Why?
- How did Sadness help Bing Bong by listening to him? What did she say or do that made a difference?



TEACHER TIP

Students can write the definition of an active listener in their ThinkGive Journals.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take Action

Explain: Between now and our next ThinkGive session on [give date], practice being an active listener. Pay attention to how your listening affects the other person and how it makes you feel.

Things to Consider

- The ThinkGive focus is on being True. Engage authentically with someone and show an interest in what they say.
- Pay attention to your feelings to ensure you're truly present and listening.
- Being an active listener, even with a close friend, can help you discover new things.

Brainstorm Actions

Here are some action ideas to inspire students. Brainstorm more together if needed to build confidence in taking true, small, and brave actions.

- When my mom got home from work, I asked her about her day and listened carefully without interrupting.
- My classmate seemed upset, so I sat beside him and told him I could listen if he wanted to talk.
- I was working on a puzzle when my stepsister asked if we could talk. I put the puzzle down and listened as she shared how nervous she was about joining her new basketball team.

Closing Quote/Image

Use this Quote and Image ([PDF](#)) to close the lesson.

"Part of being successful is about asking questions and listening to the answers." – Anne Burrell

Discuss:

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

★ THINKGIVE THREE

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

★ CONNECTION

Anne Burrell (1969–Present) is an American chef and TV personality known for hosting *Secrets of a Restaurant Chef* and co-hosting *Worst Cooks in America*. In 2015, she won the *Chopped All-Stars* Tournament and donated her \$75,000 prize to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Student Journal Questions

- 💬 Why is it important to ask questions and listen to the answers?
- 💬 How does it feel when someone listens to you without interrupting?
- 💬 How can being a good listener help in school and with your friends?

Extensions

DO

Listening Skits

Students work in pairs or small groups to create and perform skits that show active listening in various scenarios.

Discuss:

- What actions or words did the characters use to show they were listening carefully?
- What did you learn about listening from watching your others' skits?

Guess the Emotion

This activity helps students practice recognizing and expressing emotions. Write different emotions on slips of paper and place them in a basket. Pass the basket around; each student draws a slip. Students act out the emotion using only facial expressions and gestures. The rest of the group guesses the emotion.

WATCH

Video: [Active listening is a Skill!](#) (2:15). This video explains the four key steps of active listening: Stop, Breathe, Listen, and Respond.

Discuss:

- What message does a speaker receive when we aren't fully listening?
- How can our body language demonstrate that we are actively listening?

Video: [PBS KIDS Talk About | FEELINGS & EMOTIONS!](#) (9:40). Children and their grown-ups discuss their feelings and how they handle them.

Discuss:

- What big emotions have you experienced, and how do you cope when they arise?
- Who do you talk to about your feelings?
- When is it most challenging to share your feelings? What would make it easier?

READ/LISTEN

Read-aloud book: [Listen](#) (4:30) by Gabi Snyder. This story explores the difference between hearing and truly listening and the importance of paying attention to the world around us.

Discuss:

- What sounds do you hear daily, and how do they make you feel?
- What does it mean to "listen past the noise?"
- What is the difference between hearing and listening?

Read-aloud book: [The Way I Feel](#) (4:03) by Jana Cain. This rhyming book explores a range of emotions, highlighting that all feelings are normal and temporary.

Discuss:

- Which emotions from the book have you felt before?
- Why do you think people feel so many different emotions? How do feelings help us understand ourselves and others?



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