



Brightening Days: At a glance (grades 4-5)

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials is designed to give you an overview of our ThinkGive® Brightening Days program (recommended for grades 4-5). Students explore empathy and the power of small actions in brightening their own and others' days. There is an increased focus on bravery when taking action, stepping into their courage zones to affect change in their broader school communities.

Included in this packet:

- Scope + Sequence (12 lessons / 16 lessons)
- Sample Lesson Plan (Share with someone)
- 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 (ThinkGive® Elementary, grades 4-5)

Students focus on kindness and the power of small actions in brightening others' (and their own) days. The idea of empathy is introduced.

There is more of a focus on bravery when giving, stepping into the courage zone.

Students affect change in their class and school communities; as the program progresses they begin looking outward to their broader communities.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Central Quote	ThinkGive Three	SEL Core Competencies
* Note: rows in grey are not included in the 12-prompt program					
Introduction	Students are introduced to the ThinkGive Project and the fundamental importance of kindness. Start by exploring the central theme of brightening a person's day by building a paper sun and sunbeams (kind actions) on the wall. Introduce students to the idea of empathy and its importance to meaningful connection. Students will begin to understand their impact on their world and the power of their actions in creating change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What constitutes a "gift." - The importance of empathy in taking meaningful action. - How can their actions impact their world? 	<i>"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that."</i> – Martin Luther King Jr.	N/A	Social-awareness: Empathy Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Relationship skills: Relationship-building
Give to Yourself	To begin the lesson, students identify ways they already care for their bodies and emotions. The focus then shifts to the power of positive self-talk in practicing self-care. Students learn to recognize positive self-talk and use a worksheet to practice clearing clouds from their skies using their words and thoughts. Guide them to understand that caring for their emotional and physical well-being will prepare them to take action to impact others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ways they already, and can begin to, brighten their days by caring for their emotional and physical selves. - The power of positive and negative self-talk. - How can they use the ThinkGive Three to care for themselves and others? 	<i>"Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening."</i> – Lisa M. Hayes	TRUE	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Self-awareness: Authenticity Self-management: Self-regulation
Give to a Member of Your Family	Students consider how they define family and who they consider a family member. During the discussion, focus on the uniqueness of families and how diverse families impact our identities and strengthen communities. Finally, consider the importance of empathy in perspective-taking and connection with family—and how having empathy helps us avoid taking family members for granted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How family structures vary and families are different and diverse. - How their families impact their identities. - The importance of using empathy to connect with family members. 	<i>"Families are like branches on a tree. We grow in different directions, yet our roots remain the same."</i> – Unknown	TRUE	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Responsible decision-making: Reflecting Social awareness: Gratitude
Give to a Friend	Students explore the qualities of strong, meaningful friendships. During the discussion, focus on how a diverse group of friends provides various perspectives. Focus also on the importance of empathy in a friendship in understanding what a friend feels and needs. Finally, guide students in considering how a small action can be meaningful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The qualities of good friends. - The value of diverse friendships. - What is the importance of empathy in friendships? 	<i>"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."</i> – Marcel Proust	SMALL	Relationship Skills: Positive relationship-building Social awareness: Perspective-taking Social awareness: Empathy
Give to Someone Older or Younger Than You	Students learn how kindness and bravery coexist. As students discuss the different role-play scenarios, encourage them to see that even a small, empathetic action can demand bravery. For their action, students will do something to brighten the sky of someone older or younger than them in their school or larger communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The intersection of bravery and kindness. - How does empathy lead to authentic and impactful actions? - How kind actions strengthen communities. 	<i>"Make just one person happy each day and in forty years you will have made 14,600 people happy for a little time at least."</i> – Charles Wiley	BRAVE	Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Self-awareness: Confidence
Give to Community	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 should celebrate diversity by supporting and uplifting others. The ThinkGive Three focus is on Small, as only small actions lead to big change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What communities do they belong to? - How does diversity strengthen their communities? - How can small actions invite and celebrate diversity in their communities? 	<i>"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color."</i> – Maya Angelou	SMALL	Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Social awareness: Interconnectedness

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Give Your Gratitude	Students will discuss the importance of being grateful and showing gratitude to others and consider who and what they are grateful 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 and authentic to ensure their action is meaningful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of having and showing gratitude. - The impact gratitude has on the giver and receiver. - How practicing gratitude makes us more empathetic. 	<p><i>"Gratitude turns what we have into enough."</i></p> <p>– Melody Beattie</p>	TRUE	Social awareness: Gratitude Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building
Share with Someone	Students consider the differences and similarities between sharing and giving and brainstorm the kinds of things (tangible and intangible) that they can share with others. Guide them to understand that sharing intangible things like time, compassion, and ideas are all meaningful gifts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The differences and similarities between giving and sharing. - How sharing oneself can brighten someone's day. - How can sharing create more inclusive and welcoming communities? 	<p><i>"The time you shared today is the time you will remember tomorrow."</i></p> <p>– Nishan Panwar</p>	TRUE	Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Self-awareness: Authenticity Social awareness: Perspective-taking
Give to an Adult You Admire	Students discuss the adults they admire and why they admire them, distinguishing between skills and character traits. Students then consider their admirable traits and how their choices and actions can cultivate them. As a prompt action, students take action to appreciate one adult from their school or larger community whom they admire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adults they admire and why. - What is the difference between a character trait and a skill? - What admirable traits do they possess, and what traits do they want to develop? 	<p><i>"I admire all the people that shine, even after all the storms they've been through."</i></p> <p>– Anonymous</p>	BRAVE	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Self-awareness: Growth mindset Social awareness: Gratitude
Give to the Environment	Students take a big, abstract idea—the environment—and identify small ways to make an impact. The Earth Trivia activity will help them understand the expansiveness of the planet. The story One Plastic Bag will illustrate the impact of small solutions in addressing significant issues. While brainstorming, spend time identifying environmental issues to help students generate ideas for small actions they can take.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The vastness of planet Earth. - How can empathy for their community members inspire them to help the environment? - How can they generate small solutions to large environmental problems? 	<p><i>"We can't save the world by playing by the rules, because the rules have to be changed. Everything needs to change—and it has to start today."</i></p> <p>– Greta Thunberg</p>	SMALL	Self-management: Goal setting Responsible decision-making: Advocacy Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Social awareness: Interconnectedness
Surprise Someone	Students explore the positive impact of a surprise—and how the impact is less about the surprise itself and more about its intention. A surprise makes someone feel cared for. Students work in small groups to surprise someone in the school community. The ThinkGive Three focus should be on being True and authentic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How surprising someone can impact both the receiver and the giver. - How a surprise is less about the action itself and more about the intention behind it. - How having empathy will help make a surprise meaningful. 	<p><i>"Life is positively great and wonderful and exciting, and I can't wait to see what's behind the next corner and all the corners after that."</i></p> <p>– Anonymous</p>	TRUE	Social awareness: Empathy Self-awareness: Authenticity Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Social awareness: Gratitude
Give to an Acquaintance	Students consider the various relationships they have in their school and communities—and the roles their acquaintances play. The video demonstrates how paying attention to our surroundings offers many opportunities for brave kindness and how giving to acquaintances impacts the giver as much as the recipient. Finally, discuss how acquaintances can become friends and friends can become acquaintances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How giving to an acquaintance can strengthen communities. - What are the differences between family, friends, and acquaintances? - How is empathy important when giving to acquaintances? 	<p><i>"Be somebody who makes everybody feel like a somebody."</i></p> <p>– Anonymous</p>	BRAVE	Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Self-awareness: Growth mindset

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Give Spontaneously	In this lesson, students discuss what it means to be aware of their surroundings (their school and larger communities) and how to take action spontaneously. They consider empathy's role in taking impactful and compassionate action and using a scenario activity to practice using empathy. This action may take a different kind of bravery than what students have practiced, and they may require extra support. The ThinkGive Three focuses on being brave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of noticing the world around them. - How to take action spontaneously to brighten others' skies. - It is important to use empathy when noticing opportunities to give and take compassionate action. 	<i>"I give best when I give from that deeper place; when I give simply, freely and generously, and sometimes for no particular reason. I give best when I give from my heart."</i> – Steve Goodier	BRAVE	Social awareness: Empathy Social awareness: Perspective-taking Self-management: Risk-taking
Give to Someone You've Never Met	This lesson encourages students to step further into their courage zone by giving to someone they've never met. Students consider who they don't know in their communities and the importance of giving to those people. The idea of safe vs. unsafe strangers may be daunting. Depending on the students, you may discuss safe vs. unsafe places instead of focusing on people. Either way, steer the conversation in the direction of being brave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small is all! Small actions directed toward someone you haven't met can be powerful. - The importance of using empathy to impact those we don't know. - Giving oneself is important regardless of whether the recipient of your action reacts. 	<i>"We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike."</i> – Maya Angelou	BRAVE	Social awareness: Empathy Self-management: Risk-taking Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Social awareness: Perspective-taking
Expand Your Courage Zone	In this lesson, students reflect on the courage they may have needed when facing different experiences for the first time. They then listen to author George Saunders share a childhood opportunity for the kindness he missed and regrets. Assure students that being brave in social situations is challenging, but just like with any new experience, practicing taking action in small moments will make taking action in difficult moments more doable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is bravery? - How bravery looks different for everyone. - How taking action outside of their comfort zone can create inner change. 	<i>"Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a kindness."</i> – Lucius Annaeus Seneca	BRAVE	Self-awareness: Confidence Social awareness: Empathy Self-management: Risk-taking Self-awareness: Growth mindset
Wrap-up	This lesson celebrates students' individual and collective impact and develops ways to advance their ThinkGive learnings. Students watch a video highlighting the importance of awareness, presence, kindness, and bravery. They record and share their most memorable gift, reflect on why ThinkGive matters ("So What"), and consider how they can keep ThinkGive going ("Now What"). Highlight the scope of the impact the class has made on others as individuals and as a group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How ThinkGive affected their understanding of the impact of taking positive action. - Ways they brightened others' days. - How can they, as individuals and as a class, keep ThinkGive going? 	<i>"I cannot do all the good that the world needs. But the world needs all the good that I can do."</i> – Jana Stanfield	N/A	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Self-management: Persistence

Share with Someone



grades 4-5



30 minutes

“The time you shared today is the time you will remember tomorrow.”
– Nishan Panwar

Lesson Summary

Students consider the differences and similarities between sharing and giving and brainstorm the kinds of things (tangible and intangible) that they can share with others. Guide them to understand that sharing intangible things like time, compassion, and ideas are all meaningful gifts.

Students will Examine

- The differences and similarities between giving and sharing.
- How sharing oneself can brighten someone’s day.
- How sharing can create more inclusive and welcoming communities.

Pre-Activity Prep

- (Optional) On the whiteboard, prepare two columns: TANGIBLE and INTANGIBLE (THINK.GIVE section).
- Preview the excerpt from Save Me a Seat ([PDF](#)) (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](#))
Novel excerpt: Save Me a Seat ([PDF](#))
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Share with someone](#)

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Group Share

Students form small groups and share their experiences showing their gratitude to someone in their school or larger community and actions they saw posted on the Team Page.

Discuss:

- Who noticed an action that might have required bravery?
- Who read about an action that they were able to connect with? Did it give you an idea of an action you can take?



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!

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Giving + Sharing

Explain: Our focus today is on sharing. We can share two kinds of things: tangible things (you can see and touch) and intangible things (you can't see or touch). We will focus on sharing intangible things (or sharing yourself), which can be very impactful. You connect with someone and perhaps brighten their sky when you share yourself.

Discuss:

- What are the similarities between giving and sharing? What are the differences?
- What kinds of things can we share with others?

Record responses on the board/whiteboard or in ThinkGive journals, sorting gifts into two columns: Tangible and Intangible. Suggest intangible gifts like sharing one's time, ideas, perspective, and stories if needed.

Read: [Save Me a Seat \(PDF\)](#), a novel excerpt by Gita Varadarajan and Sarah Weeks. Read from the last line on page 5 to the end for a shorter excerpt. The novel is about being new and fitting in, but this excerpt shows how sharing a smile makes the main character feel welcomed. As we learn about people with different cultural backgrounds, it's important to remember that every person is unique.

Discuss:

- How do you think Ravi feels about his new classmates and teacher? What evidence do you have?
- What assumptions does the teacher make about Ravi? How do you know? Was the teacher being inclusive?
- How could the teacher have acted differently? What impact might that have had on the situation?
- Does Ravi seem accepting of Dillon (the only classmate who shares his heritage)? What evidence do you have?
- What did Dillon share with Ravi, and what effect did it have?
- What are some reasons Dillon may have smiled at Ravi?

DIGGING DEEPER

- How does this story relate to social justice? How can being inclusive or non-judgmental help strengthen our communities?



VOCAB

Tangible: adj.; perceptible by touch.

Intangible: adj.; unable to be touched or grasped; not having a physical presence.

★ DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Video: [Private vs. Personal Information \(1:36\)](#). This video helps explain the difference between personal and private information when sharing online.

Discuss: When is it okay to share personal things about yourself and others online? What is okay to share online? Why is it important to consider others' feelings when you share something online?



CONNECTION

Students fold a piece of blank paper in half. On the top half, they draw how they imagine Ravi's experience looked and felt before Dillon smiled. They draw how they think Ravi felt after the shared smile in the bottom half. Students leave their papers on their desks and hold a gallery walk. Discuss: How can you relate to this story? How does sharing impact our community? How does sharing create more welcoming and inclusive environments?

REFLECT

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Sharing Ourselves

Students form partners or small groups. Read one of the scenarios listed below (or create your own). Each group brainstorms how to share something intangible with the person in the scenario. One spokesperson from each group shares their ideas.

Scenarios:

- A classmate is sitting alone at lunch and seems upset.
- You are walking in the neighborhood, and you see an older boy from school walking his dog towards you.
- The mail delivery person is sorting mail in your apartment complex.
- The school custodian is mopping the cafeteria at the end of the day.

After a few scenarios, ask students if they noticed any patterns in what groups came up with. If not mentioned, point out how different intangible gifts can apply in the same scenario.



TEACHER TIP

Students can act out the intangible gift they come up with as a group.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date], share yourself in some intangible way with someone at school and/or in other communities.

Brainstorm

Students might be unable to plan this action; this could be an excellent opportunity to practice giving spontaneously. However, they can still think about ways they can share. Remind students that they don't have to take the actions they have brainstormed.

Things to Consider

- When you share, focus on being True (authentic). You might also need bravery, so step into your courage zone!
- Does sharing with someone feel different than giving to someone?
- Can you brighten someone's day by sharing yourself with them?

Closing Quote

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

"The time you shared today is the time you will remember tomorrow." –
Nishan Panwar

- What does this quote mean to you?



THINKGIVE THREE

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



VOCAB

Spontaneous: adj.; acting on impulse; unplanned.






CONNECTION

Nishan Panwar is an Indian thinker and writer. His goal is to share inspiring ideas to brighten people's days.

Sample Actions

- In class, we talked about family traditions. I usually stay quiet because my family is unlike everyone else's, but I decided to share today. After class, a boy told me his family is like mine. We now have this special connection.
- I decided to wear a kurta to a friend's birthday party that I got when I visited my family in India. I know it's not "cool," but I like it and feel like I'm sharing who I am.
- My little brother always wants to play, but I usually tell him I'm busy. Today, I said okay and had a great time. I felt grateful for my brother.

Student Journal Questions

-  Write about a time someone shared something intangible with you.
-  How can feeling included encourage someone to share?
-  How do you feel when you share something with someone?

Extensions

DO

Personal Artifact Sharing

Read through the Edutopia article: "Updating an Age-old Class Activity" ([PDF](#)) on how to make 'show-and-tell' a culturally responsive and inclusive classroom activity. Prompt students to bring in and share artifacts (or photos of artifacts) representing their culture.

Sharing Art

Students create art for both prompts, or you can divide them.

- DRAW SCENE 1: Imagine if nobody shared. What would the world look like? What are their expressions? What colors do you see in this image?
- DRAW SCENE 2: Imagine if everyone shared. What would this world look like? What are their expressions now? What colors do you see?

Discuss:

- What do you notice about the two scenes?
- How does sharing impact our community?

WATCH

Video: [Kid President Makes a New Friend](#) (4:03). Sometimes meeting new people can be scary. What if they're too different and we don't get along? What if things get awkward? Well, Kid President says, embrace the AWKWARD!

Discuss:

- What did Donna and Kid President share to help each other feel more comfortable?
- Why does Kid President encourage you to "get awkward with it?"

Extensions

READ/LISTEN

Read-aloud book: [Drawn Together](#) (9:32) by Minh Le. This story is about connecting across generational and language differences; it shows that sometimes you don't need words to find common ground.

Discuss:

- How were the grandson and grandfather different from one another? What could they share despite these differences?
- How can sharing with someone despite differences help build a stronger relationship?
- Describe when you shared something about yourself with someone and found a meaningful connection you didn't know existed.

Article: "How Cliques Make Kids Feel Left Out" ([PDF](#) | [audio](#)) by KidsHealth. Read the article aloud, have students read by themselves or with a partner, or jigsaw the article in small groups.

Discuss/journal:

- What are your thoughts about the article?
- Have you experienced cliques at school, during extracurricular activities, on sports teams, or at other times? Describe your experience. Were you on the inside or outside? How did that feel?
- Which ideas in the 'What You Can Do' section would most effectively address cliques?
- List the tangible and intangible things shared between circles of friends. How can sharing create more inclusive communities and reduce the possibility of harmful cliques forming?

Read-aloud book: [A Helping Hand](#) (13:10) by Payal Dhar, a story told through a progression of letters about a student's changing feelings towards a new student with a prosthetic arm.

Discuss:

- How does the author/mentor initially feel about the new student? How and why does the author change?
- How does the mentor start to have empathy for the new student?



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? _____

Unique emphasis on action. Our programs are designed to empower youth to take self-directed and authentic actions that positively impact themselves and others.

We increase access to SEL. We focus on engaging youth who might otherwise not have access to programs like ours. 75% of our partner educators serve under-resourced youth.



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

Impressive Impact. Programs develop prosocial skills, including connection (with peers, friends, family, teachers, and community), belonging, confidence, and empowerment.

Easy to implement. Our programs are highly adaptable to fit your schedule, goals, and classroom needs. They can be taught as standalone or used to complement and enhance broader SEL initiatives in any environment.

Grounded in research. ThinkGive aligns with state and common core standards and CASEL core competencies.

Exceptional support. To maximize impact on young people, the ThinkGive team partners with educators and provides hands-on support.

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