



Lights, Camera, Action: At a glance (grades 7–8)

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials is designed to give you an overview of our Lights, Camera, Action! program (grades 7–8). Students consider that everyone is a main character in their own movie. Everyone has a supporting cast and extras who enrich their daily experiences. Everyone is also the supporting cast and extra in the lives of others around them. Stepping back and understanding that others live their own vivid lives helps us connect more deeply and empowers us to find ways to take kind action.

Included in this packet:

- Scope + Sequence (12 lessons / 16 lessons)
- Sample Lesson Plan (Introduction)
- Program Overview + Impact

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



Scope + Sequence: Lights, Camera, Action! (ThinkGive® Middle School, grades 7-8)

Students consider that everyone is a main character in their own movie. Everyone has a supporting cast and extras who enrich their daily experiences. Everyone is also the supporting cast and extra in the lives of others around them. Stepping back and understanding that others live their own vivid lives helps us connect more deeply and empowers us to find ways to take kind action.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Central Quote	Themes
* Note: rows in grey are not included in the 12-prompt program				
Introduction	This lesson introduces students to the central word of the program: “sonder.” The accompanying video will help them consider how everyone exists as the center of their own world. They’ll investigate ways in which they impact their “supporting cast” and the “extras” in their lives. By the end of this lesson, they will have had the opportunity to understand that in addition to being the main character of their own stories, they also play different roles in the lives of others—who are all also experiencing complex and vivid lives of their own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The idea that everyone—not only themselves—is living a vivid and complex life. - The roles they play in the lives of others. - The opportunities they have to positively impact others. 	<i>“But there in the background, faint and out of focus are the extras. The random passerby, each living a life as complex and vivid as your own.” – Sonder video</i>	Identity Friendship Community Connection
Embrace your identity	Students will begin building a Main Character slideshow that allows them to appreciate and share the various aspects of who they are. As students learn more about themselves over the course of the program, they will add to these slides. By the end of this lesson, students will have come up with ways to understand and embrace their identities, and will have explored how they can care for themselves when they feel depleted by focusing on what they need instead of what they want.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who they are as individuals as well as how they express their hopes and dreams. - How understanding themselves can help them relate to others. - What choices they can make to care for themselves when they need to recharge. 	<i>“You are the main character. The protagonist. The star at the center of your own unfolding story.” – Sonder video</i>	Identity Individuality Self-reflection Self-care Authenticity
Share your inner mask	Students will continue to examine their own identities through the analogy of wearing masks. We all wear masks to hide our insecurities and to highlight aspects of ourselves that we believe others might find appealing. This lesson is intended to have students discover that sharing something that they have kept hidden will make them feel more connected with their classmates and others in their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How everyone wears masks. - What it means to be true to themselves. - Ways to share their inner masks. 	<i>“What if, today, in this room, you could be a little bit more real with yourself and with those around you?” – Ashanti Branch</i>	Identity Self-reflection Authenticity Connection
Challenge a limiting belief	Limiting beliefs are everywhere—spinning around in our heads and throughout society. In this lesson, students will learn about Katherine Johnson and how she challenged a limiting belief, and they will consider what limiting beliefs they hold. Finally, they will collectively generate a list of limiting beliefs along with ways they can challenge them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different limiting beliefs they hold. - People who have challenged limiting beliefs. - Ways they can challenge limiting beliefs. 	<i>“Say something positive, and you’ll see something positive.” – Jim Thompson</i>	Self-reflection Self-awareness Social awareness Self-empowerment
Celebrate someone in your supporting cast	Students will consider their own definition of the word “celebrate.” They’ll watch an acceptance speech, identify the supporting cast of the winner, and consider what it means to be supported. In small groups, students will share some supporting cast members who they might like to celebrate, then they will generate various True, Small, and Brave ways that they can celebrate someone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is in their supporting cast. - Ways to celebrate someone in a meaningful way. - The value of True, Small, and Brave support. 	<i>“We learned about gratitude and humility—that so many people had a hand in our success.” – Michelle Obama</i>	Connection Community Friendship Gratitude
Learn about someone in your supporting cast	Students will interview a classmate and then introduce them in a respectful manner to the class. This exercise is designed to promote listening with the goal of learning about and understanding someone. The prompt for this lesson will ask students to learn about someone in their supporting cast so as to better understand their vivid life—and to hopefully connect with them and their story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ways to understand and empathize with others by listening and sharing. - How learning about someone offers a glimpse into their vivid and complex inner life. - The value of differing perspectives. 	<i>“Storytelling can be more than a blog post, essay, or book. It can be an emoji, a selfie, or tweet. It can become a movement for social change.” – Alice Wong</i>	Identity Community Connection Empathy Perspectives
Be a friend	This lesson focuses on friendship and what it means to be a friend. Students generate three qualities of a friend and then watch a video about how friendship can inspire us to do great things. Finally students reflect on how friendships can change as well as remain the same over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What friendship means to them. - Different ways to be a friend. - How friendships evolve and change over time. 	<i>“Sometimes being a friend means mastering the art of timing. There is a time for silence. A time to let go and allow people to hurl themselves into their own destiny. And a time to prepare to pick up the pieces when it’s all over.” – Octavia Butler</i>	Friendship Connection Empathy Social awareness

Challenge a stereotype	This lesson is designed to demonstrate that we all have biases and we all make assumptions. Students will discuss stereotypes and why they exist. The lesson will start with a story, then a scenario exercise will encourage students to model various ways they could challenge a stereotype in different settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our natural tendency to make assumptions. - The harm that can be caused and/or reinforced by stereotypes. - How empathy is critical to challenging stereotypes. 	<i>"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."</i> – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Identity Empathy Social awareness
Give your time	Students will start this lesson experiencing the length of a minute so that they can then consider the impact they can have on someone by giving just a minute of their time. They will then think through their days to map out when they have pockets of time that they could use to take kind action for someone else.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their sense of time and how it passes. - How giving their time can be a gift. - The pockets of time they can use to give to others. 	<i>"Time is an individual gift. It is wise to cherish it carefully and give it away generously."</i> – Maya Angelou	Self-awareness Kindness Community
Meet an extra	Students will learn about the positive impact of meeting someone new and the connections that can be created, even if for just a moment. They will brainstorm how they can go about meeting people (extras) in varying situations so they feel better prepared to forge relationships. Trying new things can be challenging, so this lesson is designed to encourage students to step into their courage zones as they take action to meet and connect with the extras in their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The positive impact of forging new connections. - The emotions they may have when meeting someone new. - How new encounters can deepen their understanding of how they relate to and connect with others. 	<i>"You can't stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes."</i> - A.A. Milne	Friendship Empathy Connection
Share a belief	This lesson will ask students to think about their beliefs. They'll read a "This I Believe" essay to help them understand that beliefs are developed through different lived experiences. As students think about their own beliefs, encourage them to consider important issues that impact people and their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How different people believe different things. - The importance of knowing what they believe. - How knowing what they believe informs their choices and actions. 	<i>"I believe that telling our stories, first to ourselves and then to one another and the world, is a revolutionary act."</i> – Janet Mock	Self-awareness Identity Perspectives Community Social awareness
Act as an ally	Students will learn about different forms of allyship, and create their own middle school definitions for each. They will then consider how they might act as an ally by using each form as a guide. Lastly, they will reflect on their own ability to be allies in the lives of others, and how by doing so they can work to address inequality and inequity in our society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different forms of allyship. - How to be an ally for a cause or a person. - What challenges might arise when acting as an ally. 	<i>"Allyship is standing beside us when we need support, standing behind us when we need back up, and stepping in front when we need protection."</i> – Emma Cusdin	Allyship Connection Social awareness
Support a cause	Students will examine what causes are important to them and how they might go about addressing them. They will also consider how showing up for causes gives them the opportunity to recognize their supporting cast and extras, remembering that everyone is living their own vivid and complex life that may include challenges that can be better faced together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What causes matters to them. - Small ways they can support a cause. - How supporting a cause can generate important change. 	<i>"There is a moment when you have to choose whether to be silent or stand up."</i> – Malala Yousafzai	Identity Community Equity Social awareness
Welcome a new perspective	In this lesson, students will consider why people have different perspectives. They will first view optical illusions to help them practice considering their own perspectives. Then they will practice perspective-taking and sharing by looking at some statements and consider the various sides of arguments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our perspectives come in part from our lived experience. - Our perspectives are unique. - Understanding other people's differing perspectives can broaden our world-view. 	<i>"The best ideas emerge when very different perspectives meet."</i> – Frans Johansson	Perspectives Connection Social awareness
Empower yourself	Students will explore the meaning of empowerment. They will use quotes and eight empowerment tips to begin to understand the various ways they can empower themselves. Then they will synthesize what they learned into an inspirational poster to help others find ways to empower themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The meaning of empowerment. - Various ways to empower themselves. - How to inspire others to empower themselves. 	<i>"You become strong by doing the things you need to be strong for."</i> – Audre Lorde	Self-awareness Self-empowerment
Wrap-up	Students will use a carousel activity to reflect on what they have learned throughout their ThinkGive experience. They will then finish their Main Character slideshow or create a movie poster that highlights who they are and how they want to be known by others in their lives. By the end, they will have considered what kind of main character they want to be, the personal narrative they want to shape, and how they can act as supporting cast and extras in the lives of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What they have learned about themselves. - What they have learned about others. - How they can be more intentional about creating positive connections. 	<i>"You must do the things you think you cannot do."</i> – Eleanor Roosevelt	Self-awareness Connection Social awareness

Introduction



grades 7-8



35 minutes

“But there in the background, faint and out of focus are the extras. The random passerby, each living a life as complex and vivid as your own.”
– Sonder video

Lesson Summary

This lesson introduces students to the central word of the program: “sonder.” The accompanying video will help them consider how everyone exists as the center of their own world. They’ll investigate ways in which they impact their “supporting cast” and the “extras” in their lives. By the end of this lesson, they will have had the opportunity to understand that in addition to being the main character of their own stories, they also play different roles in the lives of others—who are all also experiencing complex and vivid lives of their own.

* Consider providing students with a dedicated ThinkGive notebook for use throughout the program. See the Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#)) for suggestions on how to incorporate a student notebook in lessons. If students will be using the ThinkGive Journal, find a time for them to decorate the front (and back) cover. Use the ThinkGive Journal cover template ([PDF](#)) or model your own decorated journal cover to provide design ideas.



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Three Poster ([PDF](#))
ThinkGive Journals
Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#))
ThinkGive Journal cover template ([PDF](#))
Worksheet: The Roles We Play ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#)
Video: [Sonder: The Realization That Everyone Has A Story](#) (2:38)

Students will Examine

- The idea that everyone—not only themselves—is living a vivid and complex life.
- The roles they play in the lives of others.
- The opportunities they have to positively impact others.

SHARE

N/A

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Opening Message

Have you ever thought of your life as if it were a movie? Have you ever thought of yourself as the world's main character? If so, you're not alone. Have you ever considered, however, that while we are all indeed the main characters in our own stories, we also all exist as characters in many other people's stories? We all play many roles; and it is the interconnection of all our stories that makes our communities strong.

Warm-up Question

- If you wrote a movie or book about yourself and your life, what would the title be? Why?

Introducing Sonder

Watch: [Sonder: The Realization That Everyone Has A Story](#) (2:38). The word "sonder" is found in the Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows. This video describes how we are all main characters in our own stories—but we also serve as supporting cast and extras in the stories of others.

Discuss:

- What impression did this video have on you?
- What about the message in the video stood out to you and why?
- Why is it important to remember that we are all supporting cast and even extras for others?

Digging Deeper

- How might understanding that others are living their own vivid and complex lives help us to connect with one another?
- How might this connection allow us to offer support and kindness to people with whom we have various relationships?



TEACHER TIP

Every lesson will offer an opening message. Display it (see slides) for students to read as they transition. The warm-up question could be a quick share, or students could reflect on a Post-it or in their ThinkGive Journals.



VOCAB

Sonder: noun; the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own.

Extra: noun; a background actor or extra is a performer in a film, television show, who appears in a nonspeaking (silent) capacity, usually in the background.

REFLECT

Suggested time: 20 minutes

A Day in the Life: The Roles We Play

Explain: It's important to recognize that, as the main characters in our own stories, we are all living vibrant, complex lives of our own. We all face challenges, and we all have moments of triumph. During ThinkGive, we'll consider who we are as the main characters in our own lives. We'll find ways to impact our supporting cast and extras, and we'll consider how we can act to uplift and celebrate other main characters.



TEACHER TIP

To get students moving, use chart paper for each category instead of the Worksheet: The Roles we Play. Students rotate in small groups and add to each sheet.

In pairs or individually, students think about all the people they interacted with directly or indirectly in the last couple of days (e.g., people in the hallway, street, store, etc.). Ask students to share examples; record them on the board.

Hand out the [Worksheet: The Roles We Play \(PDF | Google\)](#). Students take the following steps to complete the worksheet:

1. Brainstorm at least three things they do to look after themselves.
2. Choose 2-3 people they consider to be their supporting cast (friends and/or family), and write different ways they have had a positive impact on each.
3. Choose 2-3 people they consider to be their supporting cast (acquaintances), and write different ways they have had a positive impact on each.
4. Choose 2-3 people they consider to be extras (names or identifiers such as "person who walks dog by my house," "server at local restaurant"), and write down different ways they have had a positive impact on each.

Discuss:

- Have you ever considered that you are a supporting cast or extra in other people's lives? For whom do you play the role of supporting cast?
- How do you think you might enrich other people's lives as a member of their supporting cast and/or as an extra?

Digging Deeper

- How are sonder and empathy related?
- What does it take to be a great supporting cast member?
- When do you find it challenging to be a great supporting cast member?



CONNECTION

Scenario: "A Day in the Life" ([PDF](#)). Use this narrative to help students imagine their own days.



TEACHER TIP

Actions that could have a positive impact on extras in your life include a "thank you," a smile, or holding a door.



VOCAB

Empathy: noun; the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

At the end of every lesson, students will be challenged to consider the idea of sonder and take action to impact someone: a family member, a friend, even an extra they have not met yet.

Take Action

Explain: Between now and our next lesson [give date], consider the idea of sonder. Pay attention to the roles that others play in your life and the roles that you play in the lives of others. Depending on the situation, you might be simultaneously a supporting cast member in one person's story and an extra in another's. If you like, you could go the extra mile and learn something new about an extra.



THINKGIVE THREE

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

Things to Consider

- Everyone is living vivid and complex lives—and theirs might look different to yours!
- Even as an extra in someone else's day, you can make an impact.
- How can you impact or help a member of your supporting cast or an extra?

Closing Quote

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



"But there in the background, faint and out of focus are the extras. The random passerby, each living a life as complex and vivid as your own." – [Sonder video](#)

- How might understanding that others are living their own vivid and complex lives help us to connect with one another?

Sample Gifts

N/A

Student Journal Questions

-  Describe a time when you realized that you were a member of the supporting cast or an extra in someone else's story. How did you feel?
-  How can the idea of sonder help someone support a cause or a group of people?

Extensions

DO

Make a Movie Poster/Book Cover/Album Cover

Students choose a title of their story and make a movie poster, book cover, or album cover. They can also illustrate the back of whichever design they choose. For example: if they make a book cover they could add a plot description; if they make a movie poster they could include reviewer quotes; if they make an album cover they can add song tracks that reference parts of their life.

Note: This could be an interesting thing to return to at the end of the program to see if students would want to change anything after examining their lives more closely.

True Colors Personality Assessment

Students take the True Colors Personality Test ([website](#)) to learn a little more about themselves. Fill it out online first and then print, or fill out on pre-printed copies. Each color represents a personality type with tendencies regarding how they act, learn, interact with each other, etc. The goal is for students to consider how these tendencies contribute to the ways they connect to others, either as the main characters of their stories or as supporting cast and extras.

Note: Personality assessments are tools and not a complete description of who we are as individuals. Parts of these color types might feel accurate and/or inaccurate. As such, remind students that they have the right to validate their own results.

WATCH

Video: [How I Became the Main Character of My Life Story](#) (10:37). This video discusses agency and how the choices we make can help to move our personal narratives along.

Discuss:

- What are some of your strengths and limitations?
- In what ways do you feel like you have agency? In what ways do you wish you had more agency?
- How might understanding yourself as your own MC allow you to positively impact others, who are MCs in their own lives?

Video: [Communication Skills: Empathetic Listening – Inside Out, 2015](#) (1:44). This clip from Inside Out illustrates how empathic listening allows us to provide support to those in need—specifically highlighting perspective-taking and feeling-validation.

Discuss:

- How does Sadness demonstrate empathy?
- How might her actions connect to the concept of sonder?
- When have you/how can you offer(ed) empathy to a supporting cast or extra in your life?

READ / LISTEN

Meditation: [Peace Out: Time to Pause: Monday](#) (End: 6:04). This meditation leads listeners through exercises designed to focus kind and intentional thought towards different people in their lives. Students can be led through this exact mediation or facilitators can make adjustments that more specifically reflect the concepts of sonder (e.g., think of and repeat messaging to three people in your life, yourself, a supporting actor, and an extra.)

Note: while published during quarantine, the message is still applicable.

Discuss:

- How did it feel to complete this meditation? What, if anything, came up for you?
- How might this mediation help us offer empathy towards ourselves as well as the supporting actors and extras in our lives?
- How might you practice offering the messages of this meditation (“may you be happy”, “may you be healthy”, “may you be safe”, “may you live with ease”) through your words and actions as supporting actors and/or extras in the lives of others?



Programs Overview + Impact

What is ThinkGive?

ThinkGive offers action-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs that foster a culture of kindness and inclusion in classrooms. Our unique experiential learning cycle encourages students to consider other perspectives, make meaningful connections, and cultivate the belief they can positively impact their own lives and the lives of others.

Four Key Components:

- **THINK:** Curriculum centers around a set of directives for giving.
- **GIVE:** Students take self-directed action to impact themselves and others.
- **REFLECT:** Students connect their actions with concepts discussed in class.
- **SHARE:** Students use an online Team Page to collaborate with and learn from peers.



The Student Experience

ThinkGive is about self-discovery and understanding the positive effects of giving of yourself. Teachers provide guidance and encouragement, but students own their experience. They see their actions making a difference and gain agency in building kind and inclusive communities.

1



IN-CLASS CURRICULUM

Teachers introduce a giving prompt and lead discussions and activities guided by ThinkGive's curriculum. The class explores concepts like empathy and social justice, and they think about who they are and who they want to be.

2

STUDENTS GIVE

Each student decides how to give and who to give to inspired by the in-class prompt. They experience the impact their words and actions have on others, and discover how good it feels to be kind.



3



RECORD + REFLECT

Students record their gift on the ThinkGive portal. Reflective questions help them connect their individual actions to the broader concepts discussed in class.

4

ENGAGE + SHARE

Students engage with, share with, and learn from their peers on the Team Page. This collaborative component promotes digital citizenship in a secure teacher-monitored space.



5

DISCUSSION + COLLABORATION

Collaboration comes alive in the classroom with group discussion and reflection. The student experience comes full circle as they capture key learnings before setting out on the next giving prompt.



Our Curriculum

The curriculum consists of a set of directives for giving (prompts). The list below provides examples of prompts in our elementary and middle school programs. Each prompt is accompanied by a 30-minute lesson plan containing activities, videos, discussion questions, and extensions that allow educators to adjust the lessons based on the needs of their students. Standard program lengths are 12 or 16 lessons; but educators can adjust the schedule to meet their needs.

Curriculum prompts (sample)

ThinkGive elementary

Give to yourself
Give to family
Give to a friend
Give your gratitude
Give to a student in another grade
Give to your community
Surprise someone
Give to someone you admire
Give to the environment
Give to someone you've never met

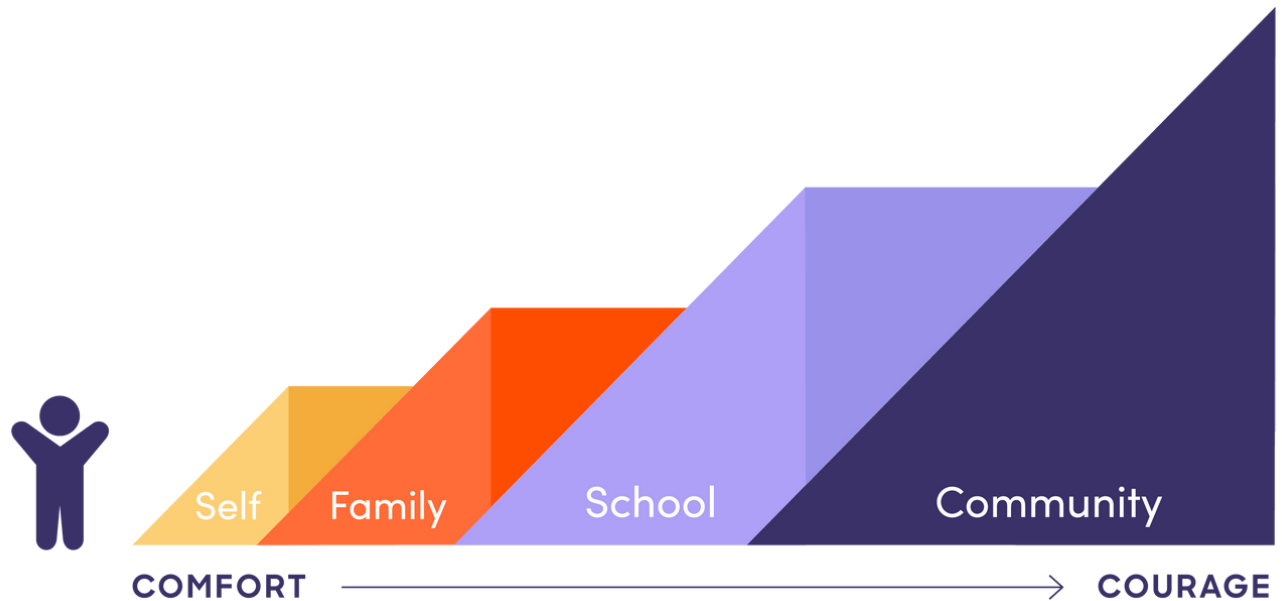
Curriculum prompts (sample)

ThinkGive middle school

Connect with yourself
Give to a friend
Give to a student outside your friend group
Challenge an assumption
Really see someone
Share your story
Give an invitation
Connect with a peer you'd like to get to know
Support a cause that personally affects you
Support a cause as an ally
Challenge a limiting belief

Why Use ThinkGive?

As the program progresses, students are challenged to step further into their courage zones. They build a strong sense of self and learn to lead with empathy and kindness.



Student Impact

ThinkGive empowers young people by giving them agency to discover their capacity to be upstanders and changemakers in their schools and communities.



Will be kinder
to others



Feel more connected to
teachers and peers



Will be a force
of good



Willing to stand up
for what's right

"ThinkGive made me recognize how I treat others, how they treat me, and how I treat myself." – 7th grader