



Mirrors + Windows: At a glance

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials is designed to give you an overview of our Middle School Windows + Mirrors program. Throughout the program, students' interactions with others inform them about themselves (they see themselves reflected in others) and others (they look through a window to learn about other beliefs, cultures, perspectives, etc.). Students see who they are as middle schoolers while also looking outward at their wider community. They use social courage as they share their own stories and take action to connect with others in their community with whom they might otherwise never interact. The central focus is on identity and social courage.

Included in this packet:

- Scope + Sequence (12 lessons / 16 lessons)
- Sample Lesson Plan (Give gratitude to someone you've taken for granted)
- Program Overview + Impact

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



Scope + Sequence: ThinkGive Middle School / Mirrors + Windows

Students learn to see who they are as middle school students while also looking outward at their wider community. They use social courage as they share their own stories and take action to connect with people in their community with whom they might otherwise never interact. The central focus is on identity and social courage.

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 will introduce the main theme of the program: Windows and Mirrors. Students will consider how fictional stories and characters act as Windows and Mirrors to their own experiences and identity. They will discover how they can use Windows and Mirrors to really see people and places in the world. By the end of the lesson, students will be prepared to look at themselves and those around them with a new awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to use the concept of Windows and Mirrors to understand and connect with others. - How to apply the concept of Windows and Mirrors to better understand both their identity and others' perspectives and experiences. - How they act as Windows and Mirrors to others. 	<i>"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."</i> – Jane Goodall	Connection Empathy Identity Self-awareness Self-reflection Perspectives
Connect with yourself	Students will consider the various ways their identities are shaped, both internally and externally. The Personal Identity Mirrors worksheet will help them see how they've changed since they were younger, who they have become as middle schoolers, and what parts of themselves might need some self-care. They will consider how slowing down and connecting with their physical or emotional self can be a powerful gift.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does it mean to connect (with yourself and others). - What opportunities they have to slow down and care for themselves – and how to find opportunities. - What are their habits of mind that shape how they relate to themselves and others? 	<i>"The most important day is the day you decide you're good enough for you. It's the day you set yourself free."</i> – Brittany Josephina	Identity Self-awareness Self-care Self-reflection
Share your story	This lesson will give students the opportunity to share who they are with others. They will create their own personal recipe to help them understand that they have stories, interests, hopes, and dreams worth sharing. By the end of the lesson, they will have shared their story with a classmate and should understand the idea that sharing a meaningful story should feel like a gift, as it shows trust and vulnerability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of understanding your identity (self-awareness). - What it means to be authentic (true to yourself). - That an authentic story can be a gift as it offers others a Window and/or Mirror. 	<i>"When you show up authentic, you create the space for others to do the same. Walk in your truth."</i> – Anonymous	Identity Self-awareness Self-reflection Social courage
Give to a true friend	Students will consider the foundational qualities of true friends, and what makes friendships healthy. They'll also consider how friendships change over time and the different ways to maintain friendships. Students will be challenged to consider what a friend might need in a certain situation, whether the gift is planned or spontaneous.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The qualities of a true friend and friendships. - How friends act as Windows and Mirrors. - How friendships – and what we need from friends – change as we grow. 	<i>"Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose."</i> – Tennessee Williams	Connection Friendship Kindness Self-awareness Social awareness
Connect with a family member	This lesson will ask students to consider ways to empathize and connect with a family member. It can be challenging to understand where a family member is coming from even though they may be close to us. Encourage students to identify a family member that they might typically take for granted and find a way to connect through an act of kindness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How connection looks, sounds, and feels – from multiple perspectives. - How empathy with family members can promote connection. - The roles family members play, and how those roles can encourage connection. 	<i>"Family isn't always blood. It's the people in your life who want you in theirs; the ones who accept you for who you are. The ones who would do anything to see you smile and who love you no matter what."</i> – Unknown	Connection Empathy Perspectives Self-awareness
Appreciate a kindness that others give to you	This lesson will ask students to consider the people, places, things, and experiences that they appreciate – both the larger ideas, and the smaller micromoments they're grateful for that they don't always notice. Through this exercise, students will consider the power of micromoments, and will learn to identify opportunities to show appreciation for kindness extended to them. By the end, students will have identified some people who give them kindness, and will have brainstormed ways to show their appreciation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What it means to appreciate all that they're grateful for – things large and small – people, places, experiences, and micromoments. - How things and experiences they enjoy are almost always the result of someone "planting a tree" for them. - How appreciating someone's kindness is an active form of giving. 	<i>"When eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree."</i> – Vietnamese Proverb	Gratitude Kindness Self-awareness Social awareness
Give gratitude to someone you've taken for granted	This lesson will ask students to write about one person in their life who they tend to take for granted. They will consider how this person acts as a Window and/or a Mirror for them. The "Experiment in Gratitude" video will help students develop their ideas more clearly. Students can then read their letter to the person they wrote about, or find a different way to give their gratitude to someone they've taken for granted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What it means to take someone for granted, and why we might do so unintentionally. - How gratitude is the opposite of taking people and/or things for granted. - The impact that our gratitude can have on others. 	<i>"When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude."</i> – G.K Chesterton	Connection Gratitude Self-awareness Social courage

Support a changemaker	Students will learn about changemakers, identifying their various character traits and what it might have taken for them to get started. Then students will consider what causes and people they care about and want to support, and find small, doable ways to do so. By the end of the lesson students will understand they can support a changemaker in various ways, even if they don't know a changemaker directly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The character traits of a changemaker. - How they can find changemakers everywhere, impacting different parts of different communities. - Ways they can support a changemaker. 	<i>"The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."</i> – Socrates	Community Self-awareness Social awareness Social justice Social responsibility
Connect with intention	This lesson will help students understand that they can connect with others through thoughtful attention. First, students will listen with intention and consider how they can slow down and ensure they are giving their presence to people in their lives. Second, they will work in small groups to discuss the best ways to connect with intention in various scenarios. Finally, the Elizabeth Acevedo clip will highlight how we all tend to fall into routines and do things automatically. By the end of the lesson, students should understand the many opportunities they have to connect with a person either through planning ahead or paying attention to their surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The difference between doing things automatically vs. intentionally. - How being present with someone is a form of connection. - What activities they want to do with more intention, and who they want to interact with using more intention. 	<i>"Empathy is not scripted. It's about being present with someone."</i> – Brene Brown	Connection Empathy Self-awareness Social courage
Learn about someone	Using Windows and Mirrors, students will think about what makes them more or less curious about someone. Through a video, students will learn about the importance of empathy in learning about others. They will have the opportunity to practice being a good listener and learn something new about their classmates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why curiosity and listening are important to learning about someone. - How the empathy gap relates to assumptions, stereotypes, and curiosity. - The various ways we can learn about someone. 	<i>"Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity. The greatest problem with communication is we don't listen to understand. We listen to reply. When we listen with curiosity, we don't listen with the intent to reply."</i> – Roy T. Bennett	Connection Empathy Perspectives Self-awareness
Challenge an assumption	This lesson explores how and why we all make assumptions. The goal is to push students out of their comfort zone to not only reflect on the assumptions they make about others, but to think of ways they can begin to challenge and address these assumptions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How our natural tendency is to make assumptions about others. - The power of assumptions – and of removing them – both at individual and societal levels. - How to use the MRI as a tool to develop empathy in order to challenge our assumptions. 	<i>"We must see the world in patterns in order to make sense of it; we wouldn't be able to deal with the daily onslaught of people and objects if we couldn't predict a lot about them and feel that we know who and what they are. But this natural and useful ability to see patterns of similarity has unfortunate consequences. It is offensive to reduce an individual to a category, and it is also misleading."</i> – Deborah Tannen	Empathy Self-awareness Self-reflection
Connect with a peer you'd like to get to know	Students will consider how to connect with peers. The video about Josh illustrates how a simple action can help people connect with others. As the lesson progresses, students brainstorm ways to ask questions that might help them connect with a peer. It's also important to help students identify opportunities where these connections can happen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ways to connect through conversation and action. - How to find spaces and opportunities to connect with peers. - How connections between individuals makes a community stronger. 	<i>"Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: 'What! You too? I thought I was the only one.'"</i> – C.S. Lewis	Community Connection Friendship Self-awareness Social courage
Give an invitation	This lesson will ask students to think about how it feels to be included, then to explore the character traits of inclusive people. The activity focuses on how including someone who is different from you in an activity/group has both challenges and benefits, and the video clip explores the power of invitations and inclusion in making a community stronger. Finally, students will consider how and when they might extend an invitation and make someone feel welcome. They should gain an understanding of the value of inviting a new person into their lives – and how they can learn from the experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Character traits of inclusive people. - Challenges and benefits of including a person who is different from you in an activity or group. - The positive impact that inclusion has on individuals and communities. 	<i>"When everyone is included, everyone wins."</i> – Jesse Jackson	Community Diversity Inclusion Self-awareness

Be open to something new	This lesson is designed to empower students to choose their own path as they consider trying something new. The Lu Ann Cahn video should show students that there are endless options for this gift. Some students will choose an activity as their new experience, while others might strike up a conversation with a new person or consider someone's different perspective. The storytelling activity should highlight that trying anything new means stepping into one's courage zone. Whatever their choice, their action should help them be open to a new idea / perspective / experience and feel personal growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The impact that new perspectives and experiences have on their personal growth and identity. - How being open to new ideas / perspectives / experiences might require bravery. - How considering new perspectives helps them develop empathy toward others. 	<i>"If you don't go through life with an open mind, you will find a lot of closed doors."</i> – Mark W. Perrett	Perspectives Self-awareness Social courage
Give to your future self	This lesson challenges students to think about and commit to developing character trait(s) that will make them a better version of themselves. The video "The Science of Character" will highlight the traits and strengths that students might already possess, and examine ways to work on improving them. By the end of the lesson students will have an action in mind that, while directed toward someone in their family, friend group, or larger community, will actually align with their efforts to develop a specific character trait in themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ways to grow and become the person they hope to be in the future. - How small choices and actions over time make up their character. - How this self-directed action positively impacts those around them. 	<i>"Each of you is perfect the way you are ... and you can use a little improvement."</i> – Shunryu Suzuki	Identity Self-awareness Self-reflection
Wrap-up	This wrap-up is intended to have students think about how they can continue to be changemakers, engaging with the world using kindness and empathy. They have given true, small, and brave gifts over the course of the program. Now is the time for them to reflect on the impact they've had and brainstorm what they can do both as a group and individually to keep ThinkGive going.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of continuing to take action using kindness, empathy, and inclusion. - How they are already changemakers; and how they can develop their changemaker traits. - The power of Windows and Mirrors to find opportunities for kindness and empathy. 	<i>"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."</i> – Maya Angelou	Community Perspectives Self-awareness Self-reflection

Give gratitude to someone you've taken for granted

 Grades: 6-8

 35 minutes

“When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.” – G.K Chesterton

Lesson Summary

This lesson will ask students to write about one person in their life who they tend to take for granted. They will consider how this person acts as a Window and/or a Mirror for them. The “Experiment in Gratitude” video will help students develop their ideas. As their action, students can read their letter to the person they wrote about, or they can find another way to give their gratitude to someone they’ve taken for granted.



MATERIALS

Share Tickets ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))
Worksheet: Showing Gratitude ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))

Students will Examine

- What it means to take someone for granted, and why we might do so unintentionally.
- How gratitude is the opposite of taking people/things for granted.
- The impact that our gratitude can have on others.



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Give gratitude to someone you've taken for granted](#)
Video: [An Experiment in Gratitude](#) (7:13)

SHARE

Think about your Last Gift...

Discuss/use Share Tickets ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) to explore how previous gifts connected to the Windows + Mirrors theme.

- How, if at all, did your gift help you look in a Mirror and see yourself more clearly?
- How, if at all, did your gift help you see through a Window to understand someone else (their experience, beliefs, life, culture, etc.)?
- What character trait(s) did this gift highlight inside of you?
- What character trait(s) did this gift highlight in the recipient?



TEACHER TIP

To make the Windows and Mirrors concept more visual, create a board / public space where students can post Share Tickets ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)).

THINK • GIVE

Ask: What if you woke up tomorrow and everyone you expressed gratitude for today was standing in your kitchen. Who would be there?

Journal or discuss as a class:

- Who's missing from your kitchen? Who should be there?
- How often do you let these people know you are grateful for what they do for you? For who they are?
- Who do you tend to take for granted? In general, do they act as a Mirror for you, reflecting who you are, or a Window, teaching you about new ideas, experiences, cultures, etc.?

Write a Letter

Students choose a person from their list, or a new person, and use Side 1 of the Worksheet: Showing Gratitude ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) to prepare their writing. Sentence starters:

- I am grateful for [this person] because...
- [This person] has taught me...
- One thing I admire about [this person] is...
- [This person] inspires me to...

Students use their notes/brainstorm to write about their gratitude and appreciation for this person on Side 2 of the worksheet. Point out that this activity is a challenge. It can be hard to express our feelings in writing.

Discuss (after 5-10 minutes):

- How does the person you wrote to reflect who you are?
- How does the person act as a Window and teach you about unfamiliar experiences?
- What micromoments could you focus on as you write to this person?

★ TEACHER TIP

If you kept the T-charts / Worksheet from the "Appreciate a Kindness" lesson, use them to help direct this lesson.

★ TEACHER TIP

If students are struggling to pick a person, encourage them to consider someone they care about. Maybe someone they've taken for granted who has been consistently kind and helpful.

★ TEACHER TIP

Students might prefer to write a poem, create a comic strip, or draw a portrait of the person. The key is that their work explains why the person is important.

REFLECT

Watch: [An Experiment in Gratitude](#) (7:13) by SoulPancake.

Discuss:

- How did the letter-writers overcome their nervousness?
- What was the end result for the letter-writers? And the people they wrote to?

Give students another few minutes to polish their writing, using the video as inspiration. If time allows, students can volunteer to share their writing.

★ TEACHER TIP

Students could share by giving a summary, giving a highlight, or sharing the name of the person they wrote about.

Discuss (post-share):

- How was your classmate's writing a Window for you into their experiences?
- How was your classmate's writing a Mirror into your own experiences?

Your Letter can be a Gift

Students can choose to read their writing aloud to the person they wrote about as their gift for this prompt. They can also send it to the person if they prefer. Acknowledge that sharing their writing will likely require bravery.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Take Action

Students find time to read their letter aloud to the person they wrote about. Reading their letter to the person they wrote about is a great opportunity to be brave and appreciate someone in their life. If that feels like too much, students can think about another brave way to share their gratitude with someone they take for granted.

Brainstorm

None needed

Things to Consider

- Which ThinkGive Three (True / Small / Brave) will you focus on?
- Are there other people in your life who you take for granted?
- Imagine how you would feel if someone wrote and read a gratitude letter to you!

Closing Quote

Use this quote and questions as an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) or a quick way to wrap up the lesson.

"When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude." – G.K Chesterton

- What does this quote mean to you?
-

★ THINKGIVE THREE

1. True: be authentic
2. Small: simple gifts have big impact
3. Brave: step into your courage zone





★ DIGGING DEEPER

G.K. Chesterton was an English writer, often referred to as the "prince of paradox." Time magazine said of his writing style: "Whenever possible Chesterton made his points with popular sayings, proverbs, allegories—first carefully turning them inside out."

Sample Gifts

- I gave my mom a letter saying how much I appreciated everything she does for me and how she is always there for me.
- I sent the most amazing teacher I have ever had a handwritten letter describing how she changed my life. I told her how grateful I was to have had her in my life, and that I will never forget her.
- I stepped out of my comfort zone and told someone I just met how grateful I was to meet them and have them be part of my life. I'm hoping this will be the beginning of a new friendship.

Student Journal Questions

-  How can showing appreciation reflect your identity? How can your appreciation act as a Window for others?
-  Write about a time you noticed someone was taking a person who you appreciated for granted. What, if anything, did you do?
-  How can showing gratitude for someone help that person see themselves more clearly?
-  What is one thing you can do to express gratitude more regularly?

Extensions

DO

Gratitude Surprise Sticky Notes

Give students one or more sticky notes to write something they're grateful for about someone in the school community. Then students "deliver" the sticky notes by placing them where the person will see them (e.g., locker, phone, cleaning cart).

Audio: [Guided meditation on Gratitude \(7:54\)](#). The basic practice of gratitude has three simple steps:

- Settle your body and mind; collect your attention in the moment.
- Recall something specific that you appreciate – the more concrete and tangible, the better.
- Enjoy the sensations that arise and spread through your body.

WATCH

Video: [Kid President's 25 Reasons to Be Thankful](#) (3:47)

Discuss:

- What items seemed ridiculous at first but then made sense after you thought about them?
- Why is reflecting on a long list of gratitudes a helpful practice?
- Create a class slideshow or video with your own Reasons to Be Thankful.

Video: [George Saunders Commencement Speech](#) (minutes 4:48-11:50)

Discuss:

- What does Saunders mean by "High Kindness Moments" and "Low Kindness Moments"?
- Saunders says "Kindness is hard." What does this mean?

READ / LISTEN

Short story: "The Seven Wonders of the World" ([PDF](#)).

Think-Pair-Share:

- What are your initial thoughts about the story?
- Using the quote, "The things we overlook as simple and ordinary and that we take for granted are truly wondrous," what simple and ordinary things have you overlooked and taken for granted in your life?
- Add to the second list of the wonders of the world and explain why you are adding each new thing.

Poems: "Ode to my socks" ([PDF](#)) and/or "Ode to the Artichoke" ([PDF](#)) by Pablo Neruda. Neruda has a wonderful collection of odes to common things!

Discuss:

- Why is it important to be grateful for small things in our lives?
- What item(s) would you write an ode to?
- Write an ode to something or someone that you typically take for granted.



Program Overview + Impact

What is ThinkGive?

ThinkGive is an action-based social and emotional learning (SEL) program that fosters 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:

1. **THINK (in-class curriculum)**: Educators deliver curriculum to introduce concepts and lead discussions. Students are prompted to give according to specific themes that move them from giving to those in their comfort zone (self, friends, family) to those in their courage zone (acquaintances, community, etc.).
2. **GIVE (individual action)**: After each prompt, students take self-directed action impacting themselves and others.
3. **REFLECT (record gifts)**: Each student is assigned a personalized page on ThinkGive's student portal where they record their actions to connect them with concepts discussed in class.
4. **SHARE (class collaboration)**: Students engage with, share with, and learn from their peers on the secure teacher-monitored Team Page.



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 component for each grade consists of a set of directives for giving (prompts). The list below provide examples of our elementary and middle school prompts. Each 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. ThinkGive offers standard program lengths of 12 or 16 lessons; but the schedule is flexible to meet educator needs.

Curriculum prompts (sample) ThinkGive elementary

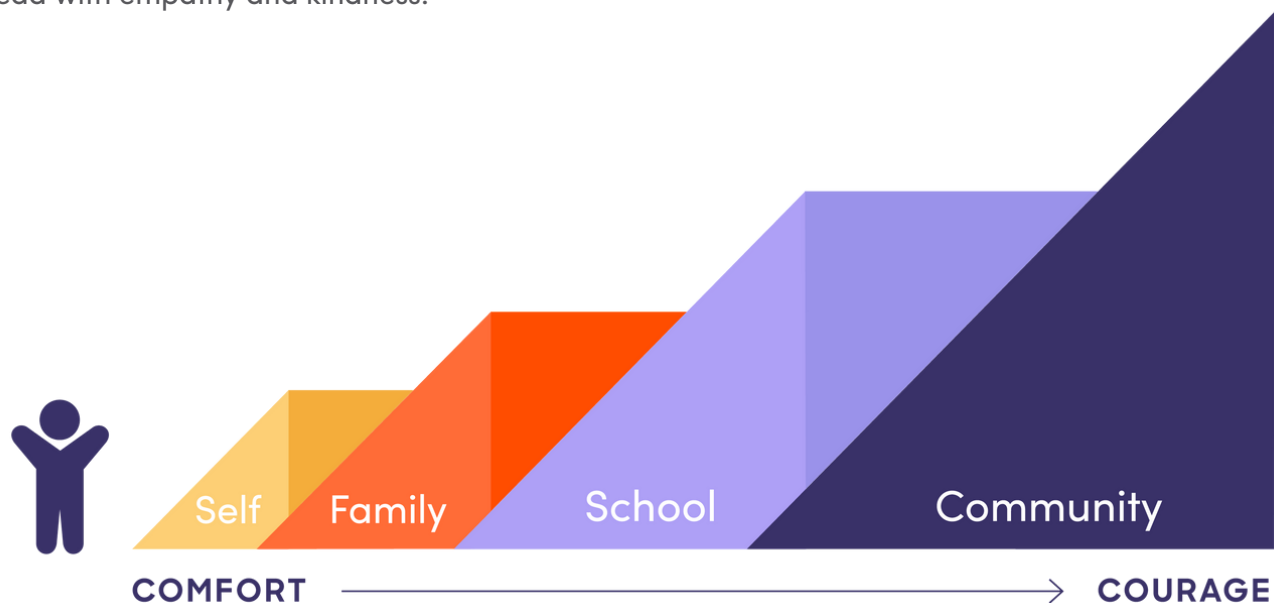
Give to yourself
Give to family
Give to a friend
Give your gratitude
Give to a student in another grade
Give to your community
Surprise someone
Give to someone you admire
Give to the environment
Give to someone you've never met

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, the prompts become more challenging; students are encouraged to step further and further into their courage zone. 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