



Social Justice Spotlight (Middle School)

At a glance

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This set of materials introduces you to our Social Justice Spotlight program for middle schoolers (recommended for grades 6–8). The curriculum is centered on exploring and taking action towards understanding the difference between equity and equality, and the role of empathy in helping us authentically acknowledge someone and build a connection. Students then apply what they learned to their lives by taking consistent, small actions to promote social justice in their communities.

Included in this packet:

- Scope + Sequence (5 lessons)
- Sample Lesson Plan (Introduction)
- Program Overview

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Questions? info@thinkgiveproject.org

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

Scope + Sequence: Social Justice Spotlight Middle School

Students explore and take action toward understanding the difference between equity and equality and the role of empathy in helping us authentically acknowledge someone and build a connection. They then apply what they learned to their lives by taking consistent, small actions to promote social justice in their communities.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Central Quote	Themes
Introduction	This introduction allows students to define and discuss examples of social justice. Students explore the differences between kind actions and social justice actions and consider how they might participate in social justice activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The definition of social justice. - What is the difference between kind actions and social justice actions? - How consistent, small actions make a change. 	<p><i>"Take a long, hard look down the road you will have to travel once you have made a commitment to work for change. Know that this transformation will not happen right away. Change often takes time. It rarely happens all at once."</i></p> <p>— John Lewis</p>	<p>Responsible decision-making: Advocacy</p> <p>Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking</p> <p>Self-management: Risk-taking</p>
Meet Others Where They're At	This lesson helps students understand the difference between equality and equity. Students explore how equal treatment is not always helpful because individuals and communities have unique needs. Indeed, a community moves towards social justice when every person receives what they need to succeed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The difference between equality and equity. - How can equality be unhelpful and even harmful? - Equitable actions lead to social justice. 	<p><i>"Equality is leaving the door open for anyone who has the means to approach it; equity is ensuring there is a pathway to that door for those who need it."</i></p> <p>— Caroline Belden</p>	<p>Social awareness: Empathy</p> <p>Responsible decision-making: Advocacy</p> <p>Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking</p>
Local Community Care: Giving + Receiving	This lesson aims to demonstrate the power of collective action in significantly impacting a cause. Students explore their connection to and interdependence on their communities and how collective actions can have a larger impact on an issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is community care? - How do we receive through giving? - Why is it important to have a sense of responsibility and connection toward their communities? 	<p><i>"You cannot change any society unless you take responsibility for it, unless you see yourself as belonging to it and responsible for changing it."</i></p> <p>— Grace Lee Boggs</p>	<p>Social awareness: Interconnectedness</p> <p>Relationship skills: Interdependence</p> <p>Responsible decision-making: Advocacy</p>
Local Community Care: It Takes a Village	This lesson builds upon the previous one (Local Community Care: Giving and Receiving). In this lesson, students learn about the advantages and difficulties of working together to achieve a more significant impact. They are encouraged to extend their individual actions into collective action. By the end of the lesson, they should have a plan to use this approach to support their selected social justice organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The power of a collective: it takes a village! - Supporting local social justice efforts improves the community as a whole. - Social justice is community care. 	<p><i>"Alone we can do so little; together, we can do so much."</i></p> <p>— Helen Keller</p>	<p>Social awareness: Interconnectedness</p> <p>Relationship skills: Interdependence</p> <p>Responsible decision-making: Advocacy</p>
Wrap-up	This lesson builds upon the previous one (Local Community Care: Giving and Receiving). In this lesson, students learn about the advantages and difficulties of working together to achieve a more significant impact. They are encouraged to extend their individual actions into collective action. By the end of the lesson, they should have a plan to use this approach to support their selected social justice organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What they've learned during this Spotlight. - How can they continue to notice inequalities and inequities and take action to promote social justice? - How can they support each other in promoting social justice? 	<p><i>"Self-care is community care. Community care is self-care."</i></p> <p>— Anonymous</p>	<p>Self-awareness: Confidence</p> <p>Self-management: Goal-setting</p> <p>Self-management: Personal agency</p>

Social Justice Spotlight

Introduction



grades 6–8



40 minutes

“Take a long, hard look down the road you will have to travel once you have made a commitment to work for change. Know that this transformation will not happen right away. Change often takes time. It rarely happens all at once.”

– John Lewis

Lesson Summary

This introduction allows students to define and discuss examples of social justice. Students explore the differences between kind actions and social justice actions and consider how they might participate in social justice activities.

Students will Examine

- The definition of social justice.
- What is the difference between kind actions and social justice actions?
- How consistent, small actions make a change.

Pre-Activity Prep

- Print and cut out the Worksheet: Social Justice Actions vs. Kind Actions (PDF) (1/student pair) (REFLECT section).
- (Optional) Label two sheets of chart paper “Social Justice Actions” and “Kind Actions” (REFLECT section).
- (Optional) Print or digitally share the Exit Ticket (PDF | Google) (1/student) (CONNECT + CLOSE section).



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals
 Student Journal Guide (PDF)
 Worksheet: Social Justice Actions vs. Kind Actions (PDF)
 Chart paper (2 sheets)
 Exit Ticket (PDF | Google)



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#)

SHARE

Nothing for the Introduction, no actions to share yet!

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Explain: Today, we are starting a project called ThinkGive. The project's big idea is that creating a better world begins with noticing, recognizing, including, and understanding others. During this Social Justice Spotlight, we'll learn that we can recognize opportunities to take action for social justice and make a positive difference in our communities. Let's start by defining social justice.

Discuss:

- What do you know about social justice?
- Share an example of social justice.
- What are some questions you have about social justice?



SOCIAL JUSTICE

noun; challenging inequalities and promoting human rights, a sense of safety and belonging, and fair access to community resources and opportunities for success.

REFLECT

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Show the definition of social justice (Slide 4). Ask a volunteer to read it aloud.

Students form pairs. Hand out cards from the Worksheet: Social Justice Actions vs. Kind Actions ([PDF](#)) (1/student pair). Students decide if the action on their card is a social justice action or a kind action, then stand, share their thoughts, and explain the reason(s) for their choice.

Optional: To incorporate movement, hang two sheets of chart paper labeled "Social Justice Actions" and "Kind Actions." Students decide on the appropriate category for each card and tape them to the corresponding chart paper. Keep the chart papers on the wall throughout the Spotlight so students can refer to them for action ideas.

Discuss:

- Are all social justice actions kind actions? Explain.
- Are all kind actions social justice actions? Explain.
- What are some other examples of social justice actions? What about kind actions?
- Is the amount of time, energy, and courage required for taking social justice actions the same for everyone? Explain.



TEACHER TIP

Alternative forms for this activity include: 1) read each card aloud one at a time together; together, students sort each (social justice action or a kind action); or 2) add in movement by having students move to one section of the room for Social Justice Actions and the other section for Kind Actions.

Explain: Social justice actions are kind actions that help create fairness and a sense of belonging for marginalized groups. Fortunately, people of all ages have been and continue to take action to advance the social justice movement, from educating themselves about issues to participating in rallies. Every small action contributes to building a fair and inclusive community where everyone feels they belong.

DIGGING DEEPER

Discuss:

- Why do we need social justice actions? Why aren't kind actions enough?
- How long might it take to achieve social justice? Explain.
- Sometimes, social justice actions can feel intense, confrontational, and even unkind. Why do social justice activists get so passionate?

CONNECT + CLOSE

Take Action

Explain: Between now and our next ThinkGive session [give date], try to notice and appreciate social justice actions!

Things to Consider

- Small actions can lead to significant impact.
- Social justice actions are kind actions that challenge inequalities and promote safety and belonging for all.
- Each person can create a positive change in their communities.

Closing Quote

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

"Take a long, hard look down the road you will have to travel once you have made a commitment to work for change. Know that this transformation will not happen right away. Change often takes time. It rarely happens all at once." – John Lewis

- What do you think John Lewis would say about the ThinkGive Three?




★ THINK.GIVE THREE

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

Reflection Questions

- What social justice action did you notice?
- How will this social justice action make our community a fairer and safer place for everyone?
- Is this an action you would take? Why or why not?

Student Journal Questions

-  What inequality or unfairness do you see in society that you want to take action to correct? Explain.
-  What social justice action do you feel comfortable taking? What is an action that might feel uncomfortable? Explain.
-  Is there a right time and place for social justice actions? Explain.

Social Justice Spotlight (Middle School)

Schedule, Curriculum Overview + Web Training



LESSON 1

THINK: Lesson: Introduction (40 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The definition of social justice.
- What is the difference between kind actions and social justice actions?
- How consistent, small actions make a change.

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students and educators record their actions on the ThinkGive website, respond to reflection questions, and collaborate with peers on the Team Page.

How to use the ThinkGive Portal

- 1 LOGIN:** Go to www.thinkgiveproject.org. Click LOGIN button, top right. Enter your username and password. Bookmark the page!
- 2 EDIT PROFILE:** You will land on your MY PAGE. Personalize your page. Click EDIT PROFILE to upload a profile image, write about yourself, and choose your color.
- 3 POST YOUR ACTION:** Click on POST A GIFT. Answer the reflective questions and SUBMIT.

LESSON 2

THINK: Lesson: Meet Others Where They're At (45 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The difference between equality and equity.
- How can equality be unhelpful and even harmful?
- Equitable actions lead to social justice.

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students and educators record their actions on the ThinkGive website, respond to reflection questions, and collaborate with peers on the Team Page.



LESSON 3

THINK: Lesson: Local Community Care: Giving + Receiving (45 minutes)

Students will examine:

- What is community care?
- How do we receive through giving?
- Why is it important to have a sense of responsibility and connection toward their communities?

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students and educators record their actions on the ThinkGive website, respond to reflection questions, and collaborate with peers on the Team Page.

LESSON 4

THINK: Lesson: Local Community Care: It Takes a Village (45 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The power of a collective: it takes a village!
- Supporting local social justice efforts improves the community as a whole.
- Social justice is community care.

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students and educators record their actions on the ThinkGive website, respond to reflection questions, and collaborate with peers on the Team Page.

LESSON 5

THINK: Lesson: Wrap-Up (45 minutes)

Students will examine:

- What they've learned during this Spotlight.
- How can they continue to notice inequalities and inequities and take action to promote social justice?
- How can they support each other in promoting social justice?

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students and educators record their actions on the ThinkGive website, respond to reflection questions, and collaborate with peers on the Team Page.



The Student Experience

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 visit their Team Page to engage with, share with, and learn from their peers. 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.





How to Maximize Program Impact



The ThinkGive cycle is designed to make the program manageable for you and predictable for students. You'll cycle through all four components with each lesson so that students can discuss important ideas and take brave action to affect change.

Promote Student Agency

ThinkGive is all about empowering youth to own their actions. With each action, students decide what to give and who to give to. They realize that their words matter, their choices matter, and they matter.

Students will also experience the topics covered in our lessons differently. We encourage you to give students options in how they wish to participate. Directives within lessons should feel like an invitation to join a discussion/activity with students; should they want to share their knowledge and learning with their classmates in different ways, great!

Our Giving Philosophy



The ThinkGive Three

ThinkGive isn't about the gifts but the journey taken while giving. Students empathize with other perspectives, explore their capacity for affecting change, and consider what kind of person they want to be. The ThinkGive Three provides a framework for students to use when taking action. Be sure to reinforce these as you go!

- 1 TRUE.** Be your authentic self in your actions and words.
- 2 SMALL.** Small is all! Everything we do and say matters, and everything we do and say has an impact—no matter how small.
- 3 BRAVE.** Step into your courage zone; challenge yourself to be brave with your actions and words.

