



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

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials is designed to give you an overview of our 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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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	Themes
* Note: rows in grey are not included in the 12-prompt program					
Introduction	Students will be introduced to ThinkGive 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 giving. Students will begin to understand the impact they can have in 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 their actions can 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	Empathy Kindness Self-awareness Self-care
Give to yourself	The lesson begins by students identifying ways that they already care for their bodies and their 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 give bravely to others throughout the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ways they already—and can start to—brighten their own days by looking after their emotional and physical selves. - The power of positive and negative self-talk. - How to use the ThinkGive Three to give to themselves and others. 	<i>"Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening."</i> — Lisa M. Hayes	TRUE	Self-awareness Self-care Self-reflection
Give to a member of your family	Students will consider how they define family, and who they consider to be a member of their family. During the discussion, focus on the uniqueness of families and how diverse families impact our identities as well as help strengthen communities. Finally, consider the importance of empathy in perspectives-taking and connection with family—and how having empathy helps to prevent us from taking family members for granted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How family structures vary, and how 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	Connection Diversity Empathy Identity Perspectives
Give to a friend	Students will 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 what it is about a small gift that will make it meaningful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The qualities of good friends. - The value of diverse friendships. - The importance of empathy in a friendship. 	<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	Connection Diversity Empathy Friendship
Give to someone older or younger than you	Students will learn how kindness and bravery coexist. As students discuss the different role play scenarios, encourage them to see that even a small and simple empathetic action can be brave. As 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 using empathy leads 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	Community Empathy Kindness Social courage
Give to community	Students will 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 big change is made up of many small actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What communities they belong to. - How diversity strengthens a community. - How small actions can invite and celebrate diversity in our 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	Community Connection Diversity Social responsibility

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Give your gratitude	Students will consider who and what they are grateful for. Discuss the more general importance of both being grateful and showing gratitude to others. Guide students to understand that gratitude begins with recognizing what they appreciate in their lives; and how gratitude then leads to having empathy and compassion for others. The ThinkGive Three focus is on True, because being authentic will ensure that 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 to others. 	<i>"Gratitude turns what we have into enough."</i> – Melody Beattie	TRUE	Empathy Gratitude Self-reflection
Share with someone	Students will learn that sharing oneself can be a gift. They consider the differences and similarities between sharing and giving, and brainstorm the kinds of things (both 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. The reading passage provides an opportunity to discuss inclusion and compassion. The ThinkGive Three focus is on True.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The differences and similarities between giving and sharing. - How sharing intangible gifts (sharing oneself) can brighten someone's day. - How sharing can create more inclusive and welcoming communities. 	<i>"The time you shared today is the time you will remember tomorrow."</i> – Nishan Panwar	TRUE	Connection Friendship Inclusion Social awareness
Give to an adult you admire	Students will discuss what adults they admire in their lives and why they admire them, distinguishing between skills and character traits. Students will then look inward and consider what admirable traits they possess, and how their choices and actions can cultivate those traits. As their prompt action, students will brighten the day of one adult from their school or larger communities who they admire by appreciating them in some way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adults they admire and why. - The difference between a character trait and a skill. - What admirable traits they possess, and what traits they might want to develop. 	<i>"I admire all the people that shine, even after all the storms they've been through."</i> – Anonymous	BRAVE	Connection Identity Self-awareness Social courage
Give to the environment	Students will 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 to addressing large issues. While brainstorming, spend time identifying environmental issues in order to help students generate small gifts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The vastness of our planet Earth. - How empathy for members of our community inspires us to help our environment. - Ways to generate small solutions to large environmental problems. 	<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> – Greta Thunberg	SMALL	Community Empathy Social awareness Social justice Social responsibility
Surprise someone	Students will explore the positive impact of a surprise gift. It's less about the gift itself, and more about the intention behind it. A surprise makes someone feel cared for. Students will work in small groups to surprise someone in the school community. As an extra gift, they are also welcome to surprise someone else! The ThinkGive Three focus should be on True.	<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. 	<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> – Anonymous	TRUE	Community Empathy Kindness
Give to an acquaintance	Students will consider the various types of relationships they have in their school/communities—and the roles their acquaintances play. The video "Unsung Hero" should demonstrate both that paying attention to our surroundings offers many opportunities for brave kindness, and how giving to acquaintances impacts not only the recipients of the gifts, but the giver. Finally, be sure to 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. - The differences between family, friends, and acquaintances. - How empathy is important when giving to acquaintances. 	<i>"Be somebody who makes everybody feel like a somebody."</i> – Anonymous	BRAVE	Community Connection Kindness Social courage

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Give spontaneously	In this lesson, students will discuss spontaneity in the context of giving; what it means to be aware of their surroundings (their school and larger communities) and take action in the moment. They will consider the role of empathy in being able to take impactful and compassionate action, and will use a scenario-activity to practice using empathy. This gift may take a different kind of bravery than what students have practiced, and they may require extra support. The ThinkGive Three focus is on Brave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of noticing the world around them. - How to take action spontaneously to brighten others' skies. - The importance of using empathy both when noticing opportunities for giving and when taking 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	Empathy Social awareness Social courage
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 in their communities they don't know, and the importance of giving to those people. The idea of safe vs. unsafe strangers may be daunting. Depending on your students, you may choose to 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 when giving to those we don't yet know. - Recognizing how giving to others from a place of kindness is valuable in and of itself, regardless of whether the other person notices. 	<i>"We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike."</i> – Maya Angelou	BRAVE	Connection Empathy Kindness Social courage
Expand your courage zone	In this lesson, students will 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 kindness that he missed—and that he regrets missing. Assure students that being brave in social situations is indeed challenging; but just like with any new experience, practicing taking action in small moments will make challenging moments feel more doable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is bravery, and how it feels to be brave. - How bravery looks different for everyone. - How taking action outside of their comfort zone can create change within them. 	<i>"Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a kindness."</i> – Lucius Annaeus Seneca	BRAVE	Kindness Self-reflection Social courage
Wrap-up	This lesson focuses on celebrating the individual and collective impact of student actions during ThinkGive and developing ways to carry their learning forward. Students begin by watching a video that highlights the importance of awareness, presence, kindness, and bravery. Then they record and share their most memorable gift. Finally, they have a discussion that both looks back to consider why ThinkGive matters ("So What") as well as looks forward and brainstorms how they can keep ThinkGive going ("Now What"). Highlight the scope of the impact the class has made on others both as individuals and as a group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How ThinkGive affected their understanding of the impact of giving. - Ways the class brightened others' days. - How can they, as individuals and 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	Community Perspectives Self-reflection

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 will learn that sharing oneself can be a gift. They consider the differences and similarities between sharing and giving, and brainstorm the kinds of things (both 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. The reading passage provides an opportunity to discuss inclusion and compassion. The ThinkGive Three focus is on True.



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](#)
Jamboard: [Sharing](#)

Students will Examine

- The differences and similarities between giving and sharing.
- How sharing intangible gifts (sharing oneself) can brighten someone's day.
- How sharing can create more inclusive and welcoming communities.

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Group Share

Students form small groups. Share out about their experiences giving as well as 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

Some students may feel dissatisfied with an action or may not have taken an action. Remind them that ThinkGive is all about building a habit of kindness and empathy—and this can feel challenging. Just keep trying.

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Giving + Sharing

Explain: Today the focus is on sharing. There are two kinds of things we can share: tangible things (you can see and touch) and intangible things (you can't see or touch). We're going to focus on sharing intangible things, because this kind of sharing can be very impactful. When you share something intangible, you are sharing yourself. You are connecting with someone and perhaps brightening their sky.

Discuss:

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

Record responses in ThinkGive Journals or on a whiteboard/Jamboard: Sharing, sorting gifts into two columns: Tangible and Intangible. If needed, suggest intangible gifts like sharing one's time, ideas, and perspectives.

Read: Save Me a Seat ([PDF](#)), a novel excerpt by Gita Varadarajan and Sarah Weeks. For a shorter excerpt, read from the last line on page 5 to the end. 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? Is Ravi's assumption fair?
- What did Dillon share with Ravi, and what effect did it seem to 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

TTangible: adj.; perceptible by touch.

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

★ DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Video: Private vs. Personal Information (1:36). When is it okay to share personal things about yourself and other people on the Internet? What do you think is okay to share online? Why is it important to consider the feelings of others when you share something online?



CONNECTION

Students fold a piece of blank paper in half. Top half: they draw how they imagine Ravi's experience looked and felt before Dillon smiled. Bottom half: they draw how they think Ravi felt after the shared smile. Discuss: In what ways can you relate to this story or activity? 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/small groups. Read one of the scenarios listed below (or create your own). Each group comes up with how they might share something intangible with the person mentioned in the scenario. One spokesperson from each group shares out their ideas.

Scenarios:

- A classmate seems upset and is sitting by themselves at lunch.
- You are taking a walk 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 floor after school.

After going through a few scenarios, ask students what they noticed about what the groups came up with and if they noticed any patterns. If not mentioned, point out various ways intangible gifts can be given for the same scenario.



TEACHER TIP

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

CONNECT + CLOSE

Take Action

Explain: For this prompt, share yourself in some intangible way with someone in the school and/or your larger communities.

Brainstorm

Students might not be able to plan this gift, in fact this could be a great opportunity to practice giving spontaneously. However they can still think about ways they might be able and willing to share. Remind students that they don't have to give the gifts they have brainstormed.

Things to Consider

- When you share, focus on being True (authentic).
- Does sharing with someone feel different than giving to someone?
- Think about the impact of your gift. 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 (in your actions and words)
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 Gifts

- In class we were talking about family traditions, and I usually stay quiet because my family structure is so different from everyone else's. But today, I decided to share. After class, a boy that I barely know came up to me to tell me he had a similar story, and then he shared it! We now have this special connection and it feels nice.
- I decided to wear a kurta I got when I visited my family in India to a friends' birthday party. I know it's not "cool" but I like it and feel like I'm sharing who I really am with everyone.
- My little brother always wants to play but I usually tell him I'm busy. Today, I decided to say yes. I actually had a really great time with him and at the end of the night, my brother unexpectedly gave me a big hug goodnight. At that moment, I felt really grateful for my brother.

Student Journal Questions

-  Write about a time someone shared something intangible with you.
-  How can feeling included encourage someone and/or yourself to share?
-  How do you feel when you share something with someone? Explain why.

Extensions

DO

Personal Artifact Sharing

Read through the Edutopia article: "Updating an Age-old Class Activity" ([PDF](#))—the description, benefits, and logistics of 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) that represent their culture and who they are.

Sharing Art

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

- 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 really, really awkward? Well, Kid President says, embrace the AWKWARD!

Discuss:

- What did Donna and Kid President share in order 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, about connecting across generational and language differences, shows that sometimes you don't need words to find common ground.

Discuss:

- Name a few ways the grandson and grandfather were different from one another. Despite these differences, what were they able to share with one another?
- How can sharing with someone despite differences help build a stronger relationship?
- Describe a time 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. Options: read it aloud as a class, have students read by themselves or with a partner, or jigsaw the article in small groups.

Discuss/journal:

- What are your thoughts and feelings about the article?
- Have you ever experienced cliques at school, during extracurricular activities, on sports teams, or at other times? Describe your experience with them. Were you on the inside or outside? How did that feel?
- Which of the ideas in the 'What You Can Do' section do you think would be the most effective in addressing cliques? Explain.
- Make a list of the tangible and intangible things that are 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 feel about the new student at the beginning? How and why does the author change?
- How does the mentor start to have empathy for the new student?



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

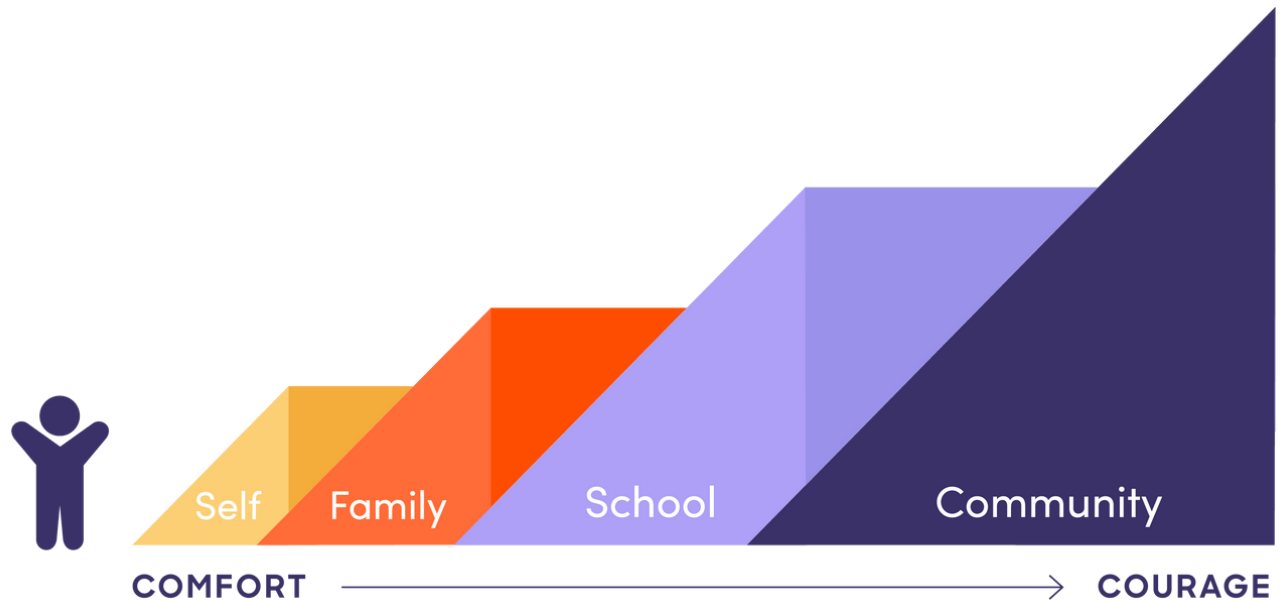
Curriculum prompts (sample)

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