



Gratitude Spotlight Middle School: At a glance

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials provides a complete introduction to our Gratitude Spotlight Middle School program, which is recommended for students in grades 6–8. Students explore gratitude by building awareness of their surroundings and practicing expressing appreciation. Students are encouraged to reflect on the many things that they have to be thankful for and take action around small opportunities for gratitude.

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: Gratitude Spotlight (Middle School)
(recommended for grades 6-8)

Students will explore gratitude by building awareness of what is around them and practicing expressing their appreciation.
They will reflect on all that there is to be grateful for and take action around small opportunities for gratitude.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Central Quote	Themes
Introduction	Students self-assess their relationship to gratitude by considering what they are grateful for and how often they express their appreciation. Students then define gratitude and explore what it feels like and why it's important to practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What gratitude means and what it feels like. - What they are grateful for, and how often they express their gratitude. - How does awareness relate to gratitude? 	<p><i>"The more grateful I am, the more beauty I see."</i> – Mary Davis</p>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Social awareness: Gratitude Responsible decision-making: Curiosity
Appreciate Your Strengths	Students identify their character strengths and reflect on how they have worked to develop them. They practice feeling and expressing gratitude for their strengths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What character strengths do they possess? - How have they developed those strengths? - What does it feel like to express gratitude towards themselves? 	<p><i>"Strive to find things to be thankful for, and just look for the good in who you are."</i> – Bethany Hamilton</p>	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Self-awareness: Confidence Self-management: Goal setting
Develop a Gratitude Mindset	Students examine all they can be grateful for and how regularly reflecting on gratitude can be beneficial. They share their reflections in an exercise designed to encourage vulnerability and connection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The many things they can be grateful for. - What are the benefits of practicing a gratitude mindset? - How can they deepen their feelings of gratitude through reflection? 	<p><i>"It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful."</i> – David Steindl-Rast</p>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Self-awareness: Authenticity Relationship skills: Effective communication
Recognize Everyday Gratitude	Students identify small moments of care and gratitude in a short film and then reflect on the everyday opportunities for gratitude that they may take for granted. They consider the many different ways to express appreciation and the impact that those expressions have on the people giving and receiving gratitude.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are many small opportunities for recognizing and expressing gratitude. - How caring for others is a form of gratitude. - How can a small moment of gratitude have a big impact? 	<p><i>"The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you."</i> – John E. Southard</p>	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Social awareness: Interconnectedness Relationship skills: Relationship-building
Wrap-up	Students consider the infinite potential for discovering gratitude in their daily lives by going on a gratitude scavenger hunt to identify objects they usually take for granted. They then reflect on what they have learned about gratitude and how they can continue practicing it in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much there is to be grateful for. - What have they learned about gratitude? - How can they continue to practice gratitude in their lives? 	<p><i>"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."</i> – Marcel Proust</p>	Social awareness: Gratitude Relationship skills: Collaboration Self-management: Goal setting

Gratitude Spotlight Introduction



grades 6-8



30 minutes

“The more grateful I am, the more beauty I see.”
– Mary Davis

Lesson Summary

Students self-assess their relationship to gratitude by considering what they are grateful for and how often they express their appreciation. Students then define gratitude and explore what it feels like and why it's important to practice.

Students will Examine

- What gratitude means and what it feels like.
- What they are grateful for, and how often they express their gratitude.
- How does awareness relate to gratitude?

Pre-Activity Prep

- (Optional) Print and hang a ThinkGive Three poster (Yellow [PDF](#) | Purple [PDF](#)).
- (Optional) Print the ThinkGive Journal cover template ([PDF](#)) (1/student).
- (Optional) Print or digitally share the Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) (CONNECT + CLOSE section).



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals
Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#))
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#)
Video: [Gratitude](#) (5:22)

SHARE

Nothing for the Introduction, no actions to share yet!

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Introduce the idea of gratitude by asking students for examples of things, people, or experiences they feel grateful for. Share one or two of your own.

Step Forward

Students stand in a line or circle. Read a statement from the list below. Students step forward if the statement feels true. Pause for discussion, and then students return to their place in the line/circle. Read the following statement. Continue for as many rounds as time allows.

Statements:

- I feel grateful for something every day.
- I sometimes take people or things for granted.
- I express my gratitude often.
- I sometimes forget to say “thank you.”
- I am grateful for the people that I am close to.
- I express my appreciation to people I am close to.
- I sometimes pause to consider what I am grateful for.
- I am grateful to myself.
- I express gratitude to myself.
- I am thankful for nature.
- I am grateful for school.
- I am grateful for my possessions.
- I am thankful for my classmates.
- I am grateful for many things.
-

Discuss:

- What did you notice during this activity?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Did you hesitate to step forward for any of these statements? Which one(s)? What were you considering while deciding?



GRATITUDE

noun; the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

REFLECT

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Cultivate Gratitude

Watch: [Gratitude](#) (5:22). This short film asks the audience to consider appreciation and gratitude.

Discuss:

- What was your reaction to the video?
- What is one thing you learned?
- What do you notice about how Brother Steindl-Rast approaches the world?
- How are noticing and being aware connected when it comes to gratitude? Is one possible without the other?
- Why is it sometimes challenging to practice gratitude?
- Is gratitude a skill we can develop? If so, how?

DIGGING DEEPER

Discuss: What does Brother Steindl-Rast mean when he suggests approaching each day “As if it were the first day in your life and the very last day”?

★ TEACHER TIP

Model the importance of gratitude by sharing examples of what you are grateful for or how a gratitude mindset has benefited you.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

ThinkGive Three (Optional)

Introduce students to the ThinkGive Three, a guide for how to take action. Revisit these ideas with every prompt so students can recall them independently. Hang a ThinkGive Three Poster (Yellow [PDF](#) | Purple [PDF](#)) in your class to serve as a reminder throughout the program.

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.

Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date], notice objects, people, and experiences around you. Choose at least one object, person, or experience you don't typically appreciate, consider how this thing/person benefits you and/or the world, and express your gratitude in some way.

Things to Consider

- Feeling gratitude requires noticing what's around us.
- The more we practice gratitude, the more we notice and appreciate people, objects, and experiences around us.
- We get better at feeling and expressing gratitude with practice.

★ THINK.GIVE THREE

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

Closing Quote

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




*“The more grateful I am, the more beauty I see.”
– Mary Davis*

- What does this quote mean to you?
-

Reflection Questions

- What or who did you practice gratitude towards that you typically might not have noticed or appreciated?
- What did you notice about this person, object, or experience that made you feel grateful?
- How might practicing gratitude towards this person, object, or experience affect you?

Journal Questions

-  Is there a limit to what you can feel grateful for? Explain.
-  What person, object, or experience do you feel the most grateful for, and why?
-  Why do you think people should practice gratitude?

Gratitude Spotlight: Middle School

Schedule, Curriculum Overview + Web Training



LESSON 1

THINK: Lesson: Introduction (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- What gratitude means and what it feels like.
- What they are grateful for, and how often they express their gratitude.
- How does awareness relate to gratitude?

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. This is where you will record your gifts. Personalize your page. Click EDIT PROFILE to upload a profile image, write something about yourself and pick your ThinkGive page color.
- 3 POST YOUR GIFT:** Click on POST A GIFT. Answer the reflective questions and SUBMIT.

LESSON 2

THINK: Lesson: Appreciate your strengths (35 minutes)

Students will examine:

- What character strengths do they possess?
- How have they developed those strengths?
- What does it feel like to express gratitude towards themselves?

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: Develop a gratitude mindset (35 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The many things they can be grateful for.
- What are the benefits of practicing a gratitude mindset?
- How can they deepen their feelings of gratitude through reflection?

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: Recognize everyday gratitude (35 minutes)

Students will examine:

- There are many small opportunities for recognizing and expressing gratitude.
- How caring for others is a form of gratitude.
- How can a small moment of gratitude have a big impact?

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 (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- How much there is to be grateful for.
- What have they learned about gratitude?
- How can they continue to practice gratitude in their lives?

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!

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.

