

## Give to a Friend



grades: 3-5



45 minutes

“How many slams in an old screen door? Depends how loud you shut it. How many slices in a bread? Depends how thin you cut it. How much good inside a day? Depends how good you live ‘em. How much love inside a friend? Depends how much you give ‘em.”  
– Shel Silverstein

### Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students explore the key qualities that make friendships strong. They examine how diversity and differences among friends can offer valuable perspectives and enrich relationships. The lesson also incorporates a book, *The Other Side* or *The Gift of Nothing*, to help students reflect on the nature of friendship and consider whether people or material things bring lasting happiness.

### Students will Examine

- Key qualities that make friendships meaningful.
- How can differences strengthen and enrich a friendship?
- What are the ways that friends give and receive support?

### Pre-Activity Prep

- (Offline programs) Print and cut the Reflection Questions: Give to a Member of Your Family ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (SHARE section).
- Hang 4-5 sheets of paper around the room, each featuring a different Carousel of Friendship question or statement (THINK.GIVE section).
- Preview Options A and B and choose the best option for students (REFLECT section).
- (Optional) Print *The Other Side* ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (REFLECT section).



#### MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals  
Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#))  
Reflection Questions: Give to a Member of Your Family ([PDF](#))  
Quote Image ([PDF](#))  
Chart paper (4-5 sheets)  
(Optional) *The Other Side* ([PDF](#))



#### MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Give to a Friend](#) | Slide Notes ([PDF](#))  
Read-aloud book: *The Other Side* (3:51)  
Read-aloud book: *The Gift of Nothing* (2:27)

# SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take a few minutes for students to reflect on and share the action they've taken since the last lesson.

## If using the online portal:

Students log in to post their action and respond to the reflection questions. When they're finished, invite a few students to share their actions with the group.

## If working offline:

Use the Reflection Questions: Give to a Member of Your Family ([PDF](#)).

- Side 1: Students write the positive action they took to impact a family member since the last ThinkGive lesson on the figure outline and display it on the bulletin board.
- Side 2: (Optional) Students respond to two additional reflection questions on the back of the page.

## ★ TEACHER TIP

If students feel dissatisfied with their actions or have yet to act, remind them that small, consistent actions help develop kindness muscles (ThinkGive Three), so keep trying!

# OPEN

Suggested time: 10 minutes

## Quote/Image

Display the Image ([PDF](#)) and/or read the quote or invite a student to read it (see slides): "How many slams in an old screen door? Depends how loud you shut it. How many slices in a bread? Depends how thin you cut it. How much good inside a day? Depends how good you live 'em. How much love inside a friend? Depends how much you give 'em." – Shel Silverstein

**Ask:** What does this image/quote mean to you?

# THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 10 minutes

## Carousel on Friendship

Post 4–5 sheets of chart paper around the room, each featuring a different question or statement about friendship. Write one of the questions/statements from the list below on each sheet.

### Question/statements:

- Being a friend is easy. Why or why not?
- What kind of friend do you want to be?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- Why is it important to have friends with different interests?
- What can you learn from a friend with a different background from yours?

Divide students into small groups. Give each group a colored marker and assign each to a chart paper. Groups discuss the question and write their ideas on the chart paper. After a couple of minutes, groups rotate to the following chart. As they read what the previous groups wrote, they can agree by adding a checkmark or short comment and/or build on existing ideas by adding new thoughts. Continue the rotation until each group has responded to every question. Afterward, facilitate a group discussion where students can share insights and reflect on how their ideas developed throughout the activity.

### DIGGING DEEPER

Each group creates a "Friendship Poster," which includes their definition of "friend" and four examples of healthy friendships.

#### ★ CONNECTION

Students write an acrostic poem about friendship and its meaning in their ThinkGive Journals.

## REFLECT

Suggested time: 10 minutes

### Option A

Watch: [The Other Side](#) (3:51) by Jacqueline Woodson (optional: hand out the [PDF](#) (1/student) for them to follow along with or instead of the video). This story explores themes of tolerance, communication, friendship, and open-mindedness. It addresses race relations through the lens of two young girls, one Black and one White, whose homes are separated by a fence.

### Discuss:

- Why does the fence stretch through the town? What does the fence symbolize?
- Why wasn't it safe for Clover to climb over to the other side of the fence? Why didn't Annie cross over to Clover's side until the end of the story?
- Why did Annie choose to sit on the fence instead of climbing over?
- Why did Sandra refuse to let Annie join the jump rope game at first, but then agree to include her later when she was with Clover?

#### ★ CONNECTION

Read-aloud book: [Our Diversity Makes Us Stronger](#) (5:00) by Elizabeth Cole. This story celebrates the richness of our diverse backgrounds and reminds us how our differences strengthen friendships and communities. Discuss: What activities or interests do you have that are different from your friends? How does celebrating these differences strengthen your friendships?

- How would you describe the friendship between Clover and Annie? What does it teach us about overcoming barriers and understanding differences?

### DIGGING DEEPER

#### Discuss:

- What other types of "fences" can exist in friendships? (Consider things like differences in background, beliefs, or experiences.)
- How can friends collaborate to break down or overcome these "fences" and build stronger connections?

### Option B

Watch: [The Gift of Nothing](#) (2:27) by Patrick McDonnell. This story explores the meaning of friendship, the value of gifts, and how people and relationships bring true happiness.

#### Discuss:

- Was Mooch being a good friend when he gave Earl "nothing"? Why or why not?
- What do you think it means that Mooch gave Earl "nothing"?
- Have you ever received or given the "gift of nothing"? What was that experience like?
- What are other gifts of "nothing" that Mooch could give to Earl?
- Why are friends so important in our lives?
- Do friends need to agree on everything, share the same interests, or act similarly to be good friends?

### DIGGING DEEPER

#### Discuss:

- In what ways can a "gift of nothing" be more meaningful than a material gift?
- Is it okay to prefer a material gift over a "gift of nothing"? Why or why not?

## CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

### Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date], take action to positively impact a friend. Watch for small moments where you can make a difference and be a "daymaker," then watch how your action creates ripples throughout your community!

### ★ THINKGIVE THREE

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

## Things to Consider

- The ThinkGive Three focus is on True. Be authentic when taking action!
- Consider what a friend might want, need, or enjoy.
- Create a ripple effect in your group, class, school, or community!

## Brainstorm Actions

Here are some action ideas to inspire students. Brainstorm more together if needed to build confidence in taking true, small, and brave actions.

- I apologized to a friend I disagreed with.
- I sat with a friend on the bus because they were all alone.
- I wrote a thank-you note to a friend who was there for me when I faced a challenging situation with my family.

## Closing Quote

Use this Quote and/or Image ([PDF](#)) to close the lesson.

"How many slams in an old screen door? Depends how loud you shut it. How many slices in a bread? Depends how thin you cut it. How much good inside a day? Depends how good you live 'em. How much love inside a friend? Depends how much you give 'em." – Shel Silverstein

### Discuss:

- What does this quote/image mean to you now?
- How does this quote/image connect to the lesson?



## VOCAB

Daymaker: noun; a person who takes time to do something kind for someone else, thus improving their day.



## CONNECTION

Use journaling to deepen reflection and strengthen writing skills—students respond online or use the Journal Questions: Give to a Friend ([PDF](#)) if working offline.



## CONNECTION

Shel Silverstein (1930–1999) was an author, cartoonist, and musician, making him a very talented man! Silverstein is best known for children's literature and poems.

## Student Journal Questions

- What do you consider your greatest strength as a friend? How does this strength help you in your friendships?
- Think of a time when it was challenging to be a good friend. What made it hard, and how did you handle the situation?
- Write about a time you made a new friend. What were some things that made this person different or similar to you?
- Describe a time when you unintentionally took a friend for granted. What happened, and what did you learn from the experience?

## Extensions

### DO

#### Potato Activity

Follow the procedure and facilitate the discussion in the Potato Activity ([PDF](#)) "to help youth eliminate stereotyping and recognize the uniqueness of each individual."

#### People with Disabilities Activity

Run the People With Disabilities activity ([PDF](#)) to allow students to help students "experience a condition similar to those faced by individuals with learning disabilities" and foster greater empathy for peers who may have such challenges. Begin by preparing for and completing Procedure 1, followed by the accompanying discussion questions. After completing Procedure 1, move on to Procedure 2 and guide students through the discussion questions to deepen their understanding and connection to the experience.

### WATCH

**Video: [A Fox and a Mouse](#) (6:23).** A lonely fox hunts a mouse, but their relationship evolves when two owls interfere with the hunt.

#### Discuss:

- How would you describe the relationship between the fox and the mouse at the story's beginning? How does it change by the end?
- What factors caused their relationship to change?
- What does this story tell you about how friendships can begin?
- Can you share an example of a friendship that started from a different kind of relationship?

**Video: [Same, Same but Different](#) (3:13).** Two pen pals living in different parts of the world become best friends after discovering how much they have in common.

#### Discuss:

- What do you think the phrase "same, same but different" means?
- Can you think of any "same, same but different" examples among yourselves?
- How can the idea of "same, same but different" help strengthen a friendship?

### READ/LISTEN

**Read-aloud book: [Four Feet Two Sandals](#) (8:20) ([PDF](#))** by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed. This book portrays the strength, courage, and hope of refugees worldwide, whose daily existence is marked by uncertainty and fear.

#### Discuss:

- What is friendship? How can you be a true friend?
- Sometimes, being a friend means giving up something important to you. How do Lina and Feroza show their friendship for each other?
- Lina and Feroza share their sandals. What else do they share?