



Gratitude Spotlight Middle School: At a glance

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials is designed to give you an overview of our Gratitude Spotlight Middle School (grades 6-8). Students will explore gratitude by building awareness of what is around them and by practicing expressing their appreciation. They will reflect on all that there is to be grateful for and will 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 6th-8th grades)**

Students will explore gratitude by building awareness of what is around them and by practicing expressing their appreciation. They will reflect on all that there is to be grateful for and will 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 themselves. 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 that gratitude. - How awareness relates to gratitude. 	<p><i>"The more grateful I am, the more beauty I see."</i> – Mary Davis</p>	Self-reflection Awareness
Appreciate your strengths	Students will identify some of their character strengths and reflect on how they have worked to develop them. They will practice feeling and expressing gratitude for their strengths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What character strengths they possess. - How they have developed those strengths. - What it feels 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-appreciation Community
Develop a gratitude mindset	Students will examine all that they can be grateful for and how regularly reflecting on gratitude can benefit them. They will share their reflections with each other in an exercise designed to encourage vulnerability and connection to each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The many things they can be grateful for. - Some of the benefits of practicing a gratitude mindset. - How they can 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>	Awareness Vulnerability
Recognize everyday gratitude	Students reflect on the everyday opportunities for gratitude that they may take for granted by watching a short film and identifying the small moments of gratitude that they see. They will then reflect on the many different ways to express gratitude and the impact that those expressions have on both the person giving gratitude and the person receiving gratitude.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The many small opportunities for recognizing and expressing gratitude. - How caring for others is a form of gratitude. - How small moments of gratitude can have big effects. 	<p><i>"The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you."</i> – John E. Southard</p>	Reflection Connection
Wrap-up	Students go on a gratitude scavenger hunt to identify objects that they don't typically feel any gratitude towards, and consider the infinite potential for discovering gratitude in their daily lives. They then reflect on what they have learned about gratitude and how they can continue to practice gratitude in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much there is to be grateful for. - What they have learned about gratitude. - How they can 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>	Perspective Appreciation

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 themselves. 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 currently grateful for and how often they express that gratitude.
- How awareness relates to gratitude.



MATERIALS

Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#)



TEACHER TIP

The ThinkGive giving philosophy ([PDF](#)), the ThinkGive Three, guides students toward giving in a meaningful, impactful way.

SHARE

Nothing for the Introduction, no gifts to share yet!

THINK • GIVE

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

Activity: Step Forward

Lead students in a game of Step Forward. Students stand in a line or circle and step forward whenever a statement is read that feels true for them. Pause for discussion when you observe an interesting reaction to a statement.

Statements:

- I feel grateful for something everyday.
- 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 gratitude to the people that 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 grateful for nature.
- I am grateful for school.
- I am grateful for my possessions.
- I am grateful for my classmates.
- I am grateful for many things.

Discuss:

- What did you notice about this activity?
 - Were you surprised by anything in this activity?
 - 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

Watch: [Gratitude: The Short Film by Louie Schwartzberg](#) (6:21) to consider appreciation and gratitude.

Discuss:

- What was your reaction to the video? What did you learn?
- What do you notice about how Brother David Steindl-Rast approaches the world?
- How do you think noticing and being aware are connected with the emotion of gratitude? Is one possible without the other?
- Why is it difficult to practice gratitude sometimes?
- Is gratitude a skill we can develop in ourselves? If so, how?

★ TEACHER TIP

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

CONNECT + CLOSE

Take Action

Try to look at your surroundings with fresh eyes. Notice things around you (objects, people, experiences, etc.) that you might not always appreciate. Choose at least one object, person, or experience that you don't typically feel grateful for and consider how it benefits you and/or the world.

Things to Consider

- Feeling gratitude requires us to take notice of what's around us.
- The more we practice feeling gratitude, the more we notice all the people/objects/experiences around us that deserve appreciation.
- We get better at feeling and expressing gratitude with practice.

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?

★ THINK.GIVE THREE

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

Student Journal Questions

-  Is there a limit to what you can feel grateful for? Explain your answer.
-  What person/object/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



WEEK 1

THINK: Lesson #1: Introduction (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- What gratitude means and what it feels like.
- What they are grateful for and how often they express that gratitude.
- How awareness relates to gratitude.

REFLECT + SHARE: Students – and teachers – answer reflection questions on the ThinkGive website, then 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.

WEEK 2

THINK: Lesson #2: Appreciate your strengths (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- What character strengths they possess.
- How they have developed those strengths.
- What it feels like to express gratitude towards themselves.

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students – and teachers – answer reflection questions on the ThinkGive website, then collaborate with peers on the Team Page.



WEEK 3

THINK: Lesson #3: Develop a gratitude mindset (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

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

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students – and teachers – record gifts on the ThinkGive website, then collaborate with peers on the Team Page.

Week 4

THINK: Lesson #4: Recognize everyday gratitude (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The many small opportunities for recognizing and expressing gratitude.
- How caring for others is a form of gratitude.
- How small moments of gratitude can have big effects.

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students – and teachers – record gifts on the ThinkGive website, then collaborate with peers on the Team Page.

WEEK 5

THINK: Lesson #5: Wrap-up (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

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

REFLECT + SHARE: Students – and teachers – answer reflection questions on the ThinkGive website, then 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 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 to students like an invitation to join a discussion / activity; should they wish to share their their knowledge and learning with their classmates in different ways, great!

The Journey is the Destination

ThinkGive isn't about the gifts; it's about the journey taken while giving. Students explore their own capacity for change, connect with others unlike themselves, learn about compassion and empathy, and consider what kind of person they want to be.

The ThinkGive Three

ThinkGive isn't about the gifts; it's about the journey taken while giving. Students empathize with other perspectives, explore their own 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.

