

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 socialjustice 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.