

Allyship Spotlight Introduction



grades 3-5



45 minutes

“Allyship is standing beside us when we need support, standing behind us when we need back up, and stepping in front when we need protection.”

– Emma Cusdin

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students reflect on what they know and want to know about allyship. They explore different ways to act as an ally, including learning from others and seeking guidance when practicing allyship feels challenging. By the end, students understand that paying attention to their surroundings can reveal many opportunities to use their words and actions to support others.

Students Will Examine

- What they know and want to know about allyship.
- Different ways to practice allyship.
- How being an ally can feel challenging and why allyship is a lifelong practice.

Pre-Lesson Prep

- (Offline programs) Print the Participant Profile Template ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (SHARE section).
- (Offline programs) Print or display the Sample Participant Profile ([PDF](#)) to guide students (SHARE section).
- Prepare chart paper for a KWL ([PDF](#))—label the columns: K — What We KNOW, W — What We WANT to Know, L — What We LEARNED (THINK.GIVE section).
- Preview and decide which Learning About Allyship to watch with your group (REFLECT section).



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Three Posters (Yellow [PDF](#) | Purple [PDF](#))
 ThinkGive Journals | Guide ([PDF](#))
 Journal Cover Template ([PDF](#))
 Participant Profile Template ([PDF](#))
 Sample Participant Profile ([PDF](#))
 Quote Image ([PDF](#))
 Chart paper



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#)
 Video: [Kids Explain Allyship](#) (1:52)
 Video: [The Importance of Being an Ally](#) (2:37)

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Set Up Student Profiles

If using the online portal:

Students log in to their My Page to set up their User Profile. They can choose a color, upload an image, and write about themselves in the “About Me” section.

If working offline:

Hand out the [Participant Profile Template \(PDF\)](#) (1/student). Students create their profiles. When finished, post them on the wall or bulletin board designated for displaying student actions throughout the program. For inspiration, show the [Sample Participant Profile \(PDF\)](#).



TEACHER TIP

Having students create and display a user profile helps build a sense of ownership and belonging. It's a simple way to start building trust, connection, and community.

OPEN

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Quote/Image

Display the [Quote Image \(PDF\)](#) and/or read the quote or invite a volunteer to read it (see slides): “Allyship is standing beside us when we need support, standing behind us when we need back up, and stepping in front when we need protection.” – Emma Cusdin

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

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Activity: Group Allyship KWL

This activity helps gauge students’ understanding of allyship and highlights what they’re curious to learn. Keep the chart handy so you can revisit it throughout the program to add questions and learnings.

Create a KWL ([PDF](#)) on chart paper—label the columns: K — What We KNOW, W — What We WANT to Know, L — What We LEARNED—and hang it where all students can see.



VOCAB

Ally: noun; a person or group who helps and supports someone or a cause—verb; to join or work together with someone toward a common goal.

Allyship: noun; the practice of supporting fairness, inclusion, and the rights of all people.

- K — What We KNOW: Invite students to share what they already know about allies and allyship. Record their responses in the K column. Encourage examples from personal experiences.
- W — What We WANT to Know: Ask what students are curious about regarding allies and allyship. Add their questions to the W column.

Explain: We'll fill in the L — What We LEARNED section as we learn throughout this program.

REFLECT

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Learning About Allyship

Watch: [Kids Explain Allyship](#) (1:52) or [The Importance of Being an Ally](#) (2:37) to help students understand what it means to be an ally.

Discuss (after either video):

- What did you learn about being an ally?
- How does the video connect to this quote: "Allyship is standing beside us when we need support, standing behind us when we need back up, and stepping in front when we need protection." – Emma Cusdin
- Let's think of real-life examples of: standing beside someone, standing behind someone, and stepping in front of someone.

NOTE: Add the examples to the KWL chart.

Explain: It's normal to feel unsure or nervous about how to act as an ally. Asking questions and seeking support is part of learning. We are all practicing allyship together.

Discuss:

- What might make practicing allyship challenging?
- What can help make allyship feel easier, more comfortable, or fun?

DIGGING DEEPER

Discuss:

- Can you think of examples of allyship from people who work to make society fairer, like social activists or public figures?
- How do their actions show standing beside, behind, or in front of someone?



TEACHER TIP

Practicing allyship can be challenging at any age. Share a time it felt hard for you—this helps normalize the challenge and encourages students to share their own experiences.



CONNECTION

Considering sharing the Allyship Pledge ([PDF](#)) with students.

Discuss: In what ways are you already practicing the actions in the pledge? What is one pledge action you'd like to understand better or try?

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

ThinkGive Three (Optional)

Introduce students to the ThinkGive Three, a guide for how to take action. Every prompt will revisit these ideas so students can incorporate them into their thinking. Hang a ThinkGive Three Poster (Yellow [PDF](#) | Purple [PDF](#)) in your room 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: Between now and our next ThinkGive session on [give date], pay attention to moments when someone shows up for you as an ally—whether they stand beside you, behind you, or in front of you to offer support.

Things to Consider

- Who in your life might need someone to stand beside them, behind them, or in front of them with support?
- You can use both words and actions to show allyship.
- Opportunities for kindness and allyship are all around you!

Closing Quote

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

“Allyship is standing beside us when we need support, standing behind us when we need back up, and stepping in front when we need protection.” – Emma Cusdin

Discuss:

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

★ THINK.GIVE THREE

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

★ CONNECTION

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

★ CONNECTION

Emma Cusdin (1966–present) is a trans woman and co-founder of Transformation*, the UK’s largest professional network for trans and non-binary people.

Reflection Questions

-  Describe a moment when someone supported you.
 -  How was this moment meaningful for you? How might it have been meaningful for the other person?
 -  Would you take a similar action to support someone else? Why or why not?
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Journal Questions

-  Write about a time when someone you didn't know very well (or at all) showed up to support you. How did it feel?
-  What does Emma Cusdin's quote mean to you? "Allyship is standing beside us when we need support, standing behind us when we need backup, and stepping in front when we need protection."