

Scope + Sequence: Brightening Days
ThinkGive® Elementary program | Grades 4-5

Students explore empathy and the power of small, kind actions to brighten their own and others' days.
Through reflection, courage, and compassion, they step into their courage zones—helping to clear the clouds from others' skies and build a more caring, connected school community.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students Will Examine	Take Action "Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date]..."	SEL Core Competencies
* Note: rows in grey are not included in the 12-prompt program				
Introduction	Students are introduced to the ThinkGive Project and the essential role of kindness. The lesson starts by exploring the central theme of brightening someone's day by creating a paper sun and attaching sunbeams representing kind actions on the wall. Students learn about empathy and its importance in forming meaningful connections. They begin to recognize how their actions impact the world around them and learn about the power each individual has to create positive change.	- What counts as a "gift"? - The role of empathy in taking meaningful, positive action. - How their actions can brighten the world around them.	<i>Pay attention to kindnesses (sunbeams) around you—both those that involve you and those you observe. Notice how they make you feel and how others respond.</i>	Social-awareness: Empathy Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Relationship skills: Relationship-building
Give to Yourself	The lesson focuses on the power of positive self-talk as a tool for self-care. Students begin by identifying how they already care for their physical and emotional selves. Using a worksheet, they then practice turning "cloudy" thoughts into positive ones, learning to clear their skies with kind and supportive words. Throughout the lesson, students explore how caring for their well-being prepares them to take meaningful, positive actions that impact others.	- Ways they already, and can begin to, brighten their days by caring for their emotional and physical selves. - The impact of positive and negative self-talk. - How to use the ThinkGive Three to care for themselves and others.	<i>Do something positive for your physical or emotional self. Focus on being True—authentic to who you are. Remember: if we're not kind to ourselves, it's hard to be genuinely kind to others!</i>	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Self-awareness: Authenticity Self-management: Self-regulation
Give to a Member of Your Family	Students explore how they define family and who they consider part of their family. Discussions highlight the uniqueness of families, the ways diverse family structures shape identities, and how this diversity strengthens communities. The lesson emphasizes the role of empathy in perspective-taking and building connections, showing how understanding and appreciating family members helps prevent taking them for granted.	- The diversity of family structures and their unique qualities. - How their families influence who they are and who they are becoming. - What it means to take family for granted, and how to shift those moments into opportunities for gratitude and appreciation.	<i>Appreciate a family member. Brighten their day!</i>	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Responsible decision-making: Reflecting Social awareness: Gratitude
Give to a Friend	Students explore the qualities of strong, meaningful friendships. Discussions highlight how friends from diverse backgrounds bring different perspectives and experiences. Students also focus on the importance of empathy—understanding and caring about what a friend feels and needs. Finally, students reflect on how even small actions can have a significant impact in showing friendship and appreciation.	- What makes someone a good friend? - How friendships with different kinds of people add value. - Why empathy matters in friendships.	<i>Take a small but meaningful action to positively impact a friend—whether in your class/group, at school, or in another community. Remember: small is all!</i>	Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Social awareness: Perspective-taking Social awareness: Empathy

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Give to Someone Older or Younger	Students explore how kindness and bravery intersect. Through discussion and role-play scenarios, they see that even small, empathetic actions often require courage. For their Take Action step, students will stretch into their courage zones by taking a kind and brave action to brighten the day of someone older or younger than themselves.	- How bravery and kindness work together. - How empathy leads to meaningful, authentic actions. - The value of building connections with people younger and older than yourself.	<i>Take a brave action to positively impact someone older or younger—in our class/group, school/program, or larger community. You can plan your action ahead of time or act spontaneously. The goal is simple: brighten someone's day.</i>	Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Self-awareness: Confidence
Give to Community	Students explore the many communities they belong to and reflect on the impact they can have within them. The lesson highlights how differences and diversity strengthen communities, and how we can celebrate diversity by supporting and uplifting one another. The ThinkGive Three focus is on Small—showing that many small actions, when combined, can create significant change.	- The communities they belong to. - How diversity strengthens those communities. - How small acts of kindness can make their communities stronger.	<i>Take a small action to positively impact one of your communities. Your action can help a person, group, or place—pick up trash at the park, write to a politician about a cause you care about, or support a youth activist. Be open to opportunities and take action to brighten someone's day. You might even inspire others—that's the spirit of community.</i>	Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Social awareness: Interconnectedness
Give Your Gratitude	Students explore the importance of gratitude—both feeling it and expressing it. They reflect on who and what they are grateful for, recognizing that gratitude begins with noticing and appreciating what they already have. Students then consider how gratitude fosters empathy and compassion for others. The ThinkGive Three emphasizes being authentic, ensuring that their expressions of appreciation are genuine and meaningful.	- Why gratitude matters—and why it's important to feel and show it. - How gratitude impacts the giver and the receiver. - How practicing gratitude helps us grow in empathy.	<i>Choose someone in your school, group, or community and let them know you appreciate them. Your gift of gratitude could brighten their day—and yours!</i>	Social awareness: Gratitude Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building
Share with Someone	Students explore the difference between tangible and intangible ways of sharing. They brainstorm and respond to scenarios where they can offer intangible gifts—like their time, attention, compassion, or ideas. Emphasize that while these gifts can't be touched, they are meaningful and valuable. At the heart of giving intangible gifts is presence—the ability to show up authentically and connect with others.	- The difference between tangible and intangible ways of sharing. - How presence is essential to sharing authentically. - Various ways to share intangible gifts to brighten someone's day.	<i>Share yourself in an intangible way with someone at your school/program, or in your larger community. Think about how your time, attention, ideas, or presence can brighten someone's day.</i>	Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Self-awareness: Authenticity Social awareness: Perspective-taking

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Give to an Adult You Admire	Students explore the adults they admire and the reasons for their admiration, distinguishing between skills and character traits. They reflect on their own admirable traits and how their choices and actions can help cultivate them. Students then take action to show appreciation to one adult in their school, program, or broader community whom they admire.	- Adults they admire and the reasons for their admiration. - The difference between character traits and skills. - Which admirable traits they already have and which they want to develop.	<i>Take action to brighten the day of an adult in your school, program, or larger community whom you admire. How can you show them how much they mean to you?</i>	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Self-awareness: Growth mindset Social awareness: Gratitude
Give to the Environment	Students explore the environment and learn how small, intentional actions can make a meaningful difference in caring for the Earth. In <i>Earth Trivia</i> , they discover the planet's vastness and how everyday choices add up over time. In the activity <i>If I Were... I Would</i> , they imagine themselves as leaders solving environmental challenges. Finally, through brainstorming, students identify local and global issues and generate simple, actionable steps to create positive change.	- Even in a huge world, small, thoughtful actions can make a real difference. - How empathy for community members can inspire environmental action. - How to identify and take small steps to address significant environmental challenges.	<i>Take a small action to help address an environmental issue. Even small steps matter—over time, they can add up to significant change!</i>	Self-management: Goal setting Responsible decision-making: Advocacy Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Social awareness: Interconnectedness
Surprise Someone	Students explore how a thoughtful surprise can brighten someone's day and show that they are cared for. Working in small groups, students plan and deliver a surprise to someone in the school/program community. The ThinkGive Three emphasizes being True and authentic to ensure the surprise is meaningful.	- What makes a surprise meaningful? - How does surprising someone affect both the giver and the receiver? - How empathy and authenticity enhance the impact of a surprise.	<i>Surprise someone! Your surprise can be public, like an appreciation song, or anonymous, like leaving a note for someone to find. Whatever the action, your kind intention will brighten their day.</i>	Social awareness: Empathy Self-awareness: Authenticity Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Social awareness: Gratitude
Give to an Acquaintance	Students explore the different relationships they have in their school and communities, focusing on the role of acquaintances. The video illustrates how noticing those around us creates opportunities for small, brave actions and shows that giving to acquaintances benefits both the giver and the receiver. Students also reflect on how acquaintances can develop into friends and how friendships can sometimes shift back into the acquaintance circle over time.	- The differences between friends, acquaintances, and strangers. - How empathy can guide the way we give to acquaintances. - How kind actions toward acquaintances can strengthen communities.	<i>Acquaintances are all around us, though we don't always notice them. Take a small but brave action to brighten the day of an acquaintance in your school or broader community.</i>	Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Positive relationship-building Self-awareness: Growth mindset

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Give Spontaneously	In this lesson, students practice noticing what's happening around them—both in their school/program and in their wider communities—and learn how to respond in the moment. They explore how empathy can guide meaningful actions and apply their learning through scenarios. Emphasize that spontaneous actions often call for courage; the ThinkGive Three focus for this lesson is being brave.	- The importance of noticing the people around them. - How to take spontaneous actions that brighten others' skies. - How empathy helps identify opportunities for compassionate action.	<i>Notice opportunities to give spontaneously to someone in your school or community. Pay attention to how they feel, what they're doing, and any challenges they face, then take action to brighten their day. Your kind action will be appreciated—so be brave!</i>	Social awareness: Empathy Social awareness: Perspective-taking Self-management: Risk-taking
Give to Someone You've Never Met	In this lesson, students focus on giving to people they've never met. Through videos, discussions, and activities, they examine how empathy, bravery, and spontaneity come together to create genuine connections—even with strangers. Students consider both safe and less comfortable contexts for giving, reflect on strategies to overcome challenges, and brainstorm ways to act compassionately in everyday life.	- How small, brave actions toward strangers can spark ripples of kindness. - How empathy helps us notice needs and respond with care. - How to give safely and meaningfully to someone you've never met.	<i>We cross paths with people we've never met every day. Now that you've brainstormed ideas, challenge yourself to step into your courage zone to brighten the day of someone you've never met.</i>	Social awareness: Empathy Self-management: Risk-taking Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Social awareness: Perspective-taking
Expand Your Courage Zone	In this lesson, students reflect on the courage required for various experiences, including some first-time situations. They watch author George Saunders share a childhood moment when he missed an opportunity to show kindness and later regretted it. Emphasize that being brave in social situations can be challenging, but practicing small courageous actions helps make difficult moments easier to navigate.	- What does bravery mean? - Bravery can look different for each person. - How taking action outside their comfort zone can lead to personal growth.	<i>Challenge yourself to step into your courage zone by taking a brave action to positively impact someone in your school, program, or community.</i>	Self-awareness: Confidence Social awareness: Empathy Self-management: Risk-taking Self-awareness: Growth mindset
Wrap-Up	This lesson celebrates students' individual and collective impact while exploring ways to carry forward their ThinkGive learnings. Students watch a video emphasizing awareness, presence, kindness, and bravery, then record and share their most memorable action. They reflect on why ThinkGive matters (So What) and consider how to continue applying its lessons (Now What). Highlight the scope of the class's impact on others, both individually and as a group.	- What they learned about the power of taking positive action. - The different ways their actions helped brighten others' days. - How can they, individually and as a group, keep ThinkGive going?	<i>Throughout ThinkGive, we've practiced taking true, small, and brave actions. The world needs all of us to be positive and kind—let's keep brightening others' skies every day!</i>	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Self-management: Persistence