

Scope + Sequence: Windows + Mirrors (ThinkGive® Middle School, grades 6-8)

Students learn to see who they are as middle school students while looking outward at their wider community.
They use social courage as they share their own stories and take action to connect with people in their community with whom they might otherwise never interact.
The central focus is on identity and social courage.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Central Quote	SEL Core Competencies
* Note: rows in grey are not included in the 12-prompt program				
Introduction	This lesson introduces the program's theme: Windows + Mirrors. Students consider how fictional stories and characters act as windows and mirrors to their experiences and identities and discover how to use windows and mirrors to learn from people and places. By the end of the lesson, students will be ready to use their newfound awareness to examine themselves and those around them.	- How can they use the concept of Windows + Mirrors to understand and connect with others' perspectives and experiences? - How can they use the concept of Windows + Mirrors to explore their identities? - How can they act as windows and mirrors for others?	<i>"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."</i> – Jane Goodall	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Social awareness: Perspective-taking Social awareness: Empathy
Connect with Yourself	This lesson helps students understand the internal and external factors shaping their identities. They use the Personal Identity Mirrors worksheet to consider how they've changed since they were younger, who they have become as middle schoolers, and what parts of themselves might need self-care. They consider how slowing down and connecting with their physical or emotional selves can be powerful. Finally, introduce the ThinkGive Three, which will guide their taking action throughout the program.	- What it means to connect with yourself. - What opportunities do they have to slow down and care for themselves? - What are the mental habits that shape how they relate to themselves?	<i>"The most important day is the day you decide you're good enough for you. It's the day you set yourself free."</i> – Brittany Josephina	Self-awareness: Identifying emotions Self-awareness: Authenticity Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception
Share Your Story	This lesson allows students to share who they are with others. They create a personal recipe to help them understand they have stories, interests, hopes, and dreams worth sharing, and then they share their story with a peer. By the end of the lesson, they understand that sharing a meaningful story is a gift because it shows trust and vulnerability.	- Sharing an authentic story with others is a gift because it offers them a window and/or mirror. - Sharing an authentic story with others is a gift to ourselves because we develop courage and authenticity. - How sharing stories strengthens connection and belonging.	<i>"When you show up authentic, you create the space for others to do the same. Walk in your truth."</i> – Anonymous	Self-awareness: Authenticity Relationship skills: Effective communication Self-management: Risk-taking
Give to a Friendship	This lesson prompts students to consider the fundamental aspects of friendship, the characteristics of healthy relationships, and how friendships can serve as a reflection or an opportunity for new experiences. Additionally, students examine how positive actions can cultivate trust and reinforce friendships over time.	- The qualities of a good friend and healthy friendships. - How friends act as Windows and Mirrors. - How our friendships grow and deepen with purposeful kind actions.	<i>"Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose."</i> – Tennessee Williams	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Relationship-building
Connect With a (Chosen) Family Member	This lesson encourages students to consider ways to connect with a (chosen) family member. Connecting with people, including family members, can be challenging for various reasons. However, there is great value in making the effort because the family dynamic provides a sense of safety. Encourage students to take positive action to create a moment of connection with a chosen family member.	- How connection looks, sounds, and feels—from multiple perspectives. - How having empathy for family members promotes connection. - How can they better understand and appreciate the mirrors and windows in their relationships with chosen family members?	<i>"Family isn't always blood. It's the people in your life who want you in theirs; the ones who accept you for who you are. The ones who would do anything to see you smile and who love you no matter what."</i> – Unknown	Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Relationship-building Social awareness: Interconnectedness
Appreciate a Kindness Someone Gives to You	This lesson asks students to consider the people, places, things, experiences, and micro-moments they appreciate, which they might overlook or take for granted. Through this exercise, students consider the power of micro-moments and learn to identify opportunities to show appreciation for the kindness extended to them. They identify people who give them kindness and brainstorm ways to show their appreciation.	- What does it mean to appreciate people, places, experiences, and micro-moments? - Things and experiences they enjoy are almost always the result of someone "planting a tree" for them. - How appreciating someone's kindness is an active form of giving.	<i>"When eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree."</i> – Vietnamese Proverb	Social awareness: Gratitude Responsible decision-making: Curiosity Self-management: Risk-taking
Give Gratitude to Someone You've Taken for Granted	This lesson invites students to write about a person they've taken for granted and reflect on how this person serves as a window and/or a mirror for them. To help them develop their ideas, students watch the "Experiment in Gratitude" video and write a letter of gratitude. As an action, they can either read their letter to the person they wrote about or find a different way to express their appreciation for someone they've taken for granted.	- What it means to take someone for granted, and why they might do so unintentionally. - How is gratitude the opposite of taking people and things for granted? - The impact that their gratitude can have on others.	<i>"When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude."</i> – G.K. Chesterton	Social awareness: Gratitude Social awareness: Interconnectedness Relationship skills: Relationship-building
Support a Changemaker	In this lesson, students learn about changemakers. They consider the causes that matter to them, their character traits, and reasons for deciding to take action. By the end of the lesson, students will understand that there are many ways to support a changemaker, even if they don't know the person, and they find small, doable ways to offer support.	- The character traits of a changemaker. - They can find changemakers everywhere, impacting different communities. - Ways they can support a changemaker.	<i>"The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."</i> – Socrates	Relationship skills: Collaboration Self-management: Personal agency Responsible decision-making: Advocacy

Connect With Intention	This lesson helps students understand how they can intentionally connect with others. The three parts build on each other. First, students practice slowing down, listening, and giving their presence to others. Second, they work in small groups to discuss ways to connect with intention in various scenarios. Finally, the video highlights how we all fall into routines and stop being present with our actions. By the end of the lesson, students will better understand how to intentionally connect with others by planning or paying attention to their surroundings.	- What is the difference between doing things automatically vs. intentionally? - How being present with someone is a form of connection. - What activities do they want to do with more intention, and with whom do they want to interact more intentionally?	<i>“Empathy is not scripted. It’s about being present with someone.”</i> – Brene Brown	Self-management: Goal-setting Self-management: Personal agency Responsible decision-making: Curiosity
Learn About Someone	Students use windows and mirrors to think about what makes them more or less curious about someone. They consider the importance of empathy in learning about others. Finally, they practice being active listeners and learn something new about their classmates.	- Why are curiosity and listening essential to learning about someone? - How can the empathy gap relate to assumptions, stereotypes, and curiosity? - There are many ways to learn about someone.	<i>“Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity. The greatest problem with communication is we don’t listen to understand. We listen to reply. When we listen with curiosity, we don’t listen with the intent to reply.”</i> – Roy T. Bennett	Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Relationship-building Responsible decision-making: Curiosity
Challenge an Assumption You Hold	This lesson explores how and why we make assumptions, challenges students to think critically about their beliefs, and encourages them to step out of their comfort zones to challenge and address their assumptions.	- Everyone has a natural tendency to make assumptions about others. - What is the power of assumptions—and removing them—at the individual and societal levels? - How can they use an MRI to use empathy to challenge their assumptions?	<i>“We must see the world in patterns in order to make sense of it; we wouldn’t be able to deal with the daily onslaught of people and objects if we couldn’t predict a lot about them and feel that we know who and what they are. But this natural and useful ability to see patterns of similarity has unfortunate consequences. It is offensive to reduce an individual to a category, and it is also misleading.”</i> – Deborah Tannen	Self-awareness: Examining biases Social awareness: Examining norms Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking
Connect With a Peer You’d Like to Get to Know	Students explore ways to build meaningful connections with their peers. The video provides a powerful example of how small actions or thoughtful questions can spark meaningful connections. As the lesson unfolds, students brainstorm questions they could ask to foster connections and identify everyday opportunities, such as during lunch, group work, or transitions, where these moments can naturally occur.	- Ways to connect through conversation and action. - How can they find spaces and opportunities to connect with peers? - How do connections between individuals make a community stronger?	<i>“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’”</i> – C.S. Lewis	Relationship skills: Relationship-building Self-management: Risk-taking Responsible decision-making: Curiosity
Give an Invitation	This lesson invites students to consider inclusion and how it appears in social dynamics. Students engage in an experiential activity that simulates inclusion and exclusion, reflecting on their emotions and ideas. Then, they watch a video to explore the power of invitations and inclusion in strengthening a community. Finally, they consider how and when they might help someone feel welcome by extending an invitation.	- The impact of extending invitations and practicing inclusion. - How extending an invitation connects to the concept of Windows and Mirrors. - How do invitations and inclusion strengthen a community?	<i>“When everyone is included, everyone wins.”</i> – Jesse Jackson	Social awareness: Empathy Relationship skills: Relationship-building Self-management: Risk-taking
Be Open to Something New	This lesson aims to inspire students to try something new, using windows and mirrors to enhance their learning. The Lu Ann Cahn video describes the neurological, emotional, and relational benefits of trying something new. Some students will choose an activity as their new experience, while others might start a conversation with someone they don’t know or consider a different perspective. The "Do the New Project" activity helps students brainstorm new things they can try. Whatever their choice, their action will support their personal growth as they open up to new ideas, perspectives, and experiences.	- The impact of new perspectives and experiences on their growth and identity. - Being open to new ideas/perspectives/experiences requires bravery. - How considering new ideas/perspectives/experiences helps develop empathy.	<i>“If you don’t go through life with an open mind, you will find a lot of closed doors.”</i> – Mark W. Perrett	Self-awareness: Growth mindset Self-management: Risk-taking Responsible decision-making: Curiosity
Give to Your Future Self	This lesson encourages students to think about and embrace specific character traits that will help them become better individuals. The video "The Science of Character" focuses on identifying students' existing qualities and strengths and suggesting ways to enhance them. By the end of the lesson, students will commit to taking action directed towards someone in their family, friend group, or larger community, with the goal of developing a specific character trait in themselves.	- A person's character is shaped by the many small choices and actions they make over time. - Their growth mindset helps them to develop their character. - How can their self-directed actions positively impact those around them?	<i>“Each of you is perfect the way you are ... and you can use a little improvement.”</i> – Shunryu Suzuki	Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Self-awareness: Growth mindset Self-management: Persistence
Wrap-Up	Students consider how they can continue to take positive actions to impact themselves and others even after ThinkGive has ended. These actions provide opportunities for self-reflection (mirrors) and learning from others (windows). They reflect on the impact of their actions and brainstorm ideas for keeping ThinkGive going, both as a group and as individuals.	- It is important to reflect on an experience to understand how to incorporate its lessons into your life. - How has ThinkGive impacted them and their communities? - How can they keep ThinkGive going and create an even more significant impact?	<i>“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”</i> – Maya Angelou	Relationship skills: Effective communication Self-management: Persistence Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking