



Social Justice Spotlight (middle school) At a glance

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials is designed to give you an overview of our Social Justice Spotlight Middle School (recommended for 6th–8th grades). Students will explore and take action around the difference between equity and equality, and how empathy helps us authentically acknowledge someone and build connection. Then they will apply what they learned to their own lives by taking consistent, small actions to make change for social justice in their communities.

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: Social Justice Spotlight Middle School
(recommended for 6th-8th grades)**

Students will explore and take action around the difference between equity and equality, and how empathy helps us authentically acknowledge someone and build connection. Then they will apply what they learned to their own lives by taking consistent, small actions to make change for social justice in their communities.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Central Quote	Themes
Introduction	This Introduction will provide an opportunity for students to discuss and define social justice. The idea of inequity and inequality will generate discussion among students about the systems that exist around them. While those systems might feel huge and overwhelming, focus on making incremental changes by taking small actions and including people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The definition of social justice. - The difference between equity and equality. - The importance of consistent, small actions to make change. 	<i>"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."</i> – John Lewis	Justice
Really see someone	This lesson will help students see people from more than one perspective. When they know only one story about someone, it means they have an incomplete and simplistic understanding of them. In order to really see someone, students first need to appreciate that we are all complex individuals with multiple stories. When they see people as complex, they are more prepared to speak up and act when they see injustices in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What it means to really see someone. - How empathy can help us genuinely acknowledge someone and build connection. 	<i>"If we could look into each other's hearts and understand the unique challenges each of us faces, I think we would treat each other much more gently, with more love, patience, tolerance, and care."</i> – Marvin J. Ashton	Connection Perspectives
Give to the environment	This lesson will focus on finding ways to help the environment. Environmental justice will be introduced, and students will begin to recognize that environmental resources are not always shared equitably. Students will explore their connection to and dependence on the environment while understanding that small individual actions can help in creating environmental equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The meaning of environmental justice. - Different ways environmental resources are shared in and across communities. - How to identify small actions that can help work toward environmental equity. 	<i>"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."</i> – Native American Proverb	Self awareness Community
Support a cause in your community	This lesson will help students recognize the various communities they are a part of. They will work with classmates to identify a cause that matters to them in their community and find small ways they can take action to help. By the end of the lesson, students should have at least one action they can do either individually or with their group to support a cause in their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are their communities? - How everyone – at any age – can make a difference with enough determination and support. - How to identify ways to help a community. - How small actions can lead to bigger change. 	<i>"In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it."</i> – Marianne Williamson	Community
Wrap-up	This lesson is designed to have students reflect on what they have learned during this Spotlight, and what learnings they can carry forward. Take time to consider ways to keep their momentum moving forward so that they continue to consider social justice in their everyday lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What they've learned during this Spotlight. - Patterns that exist in our society and how to break them. - How they can continue to notice inequalities and take action to promote justice. 	<i>"Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained."</i> – Helen Keller	Self awareness Community

Social Justice Spotlight

Introduction



grades 6-8



30 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 will provide an opportunity for students to discuss and define social justice. The idea of inequity and inequality will generate discussion among students about the systems that exist around them. While those systems might feel huge and overwhelming, focus on making incremental changes by taking small actions and including people.

Students will Examine

- The definition of social justice.
- The difference between equity and equality.
- The importance of consistent, small actions to make change.



MATERIALS

Equality v. Equity ([PDF](#))
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#)
Video: [Equity and Inequality](#)
(3:44)

SHARE

Nothing for the Introduction, no gifts to share yet!

THINK • GIVE

Explain that today we are starting a project called ThinkGive. The project’s big idea is that giving to others – noticing others, recognizing others, including others, understanding others – creates a better world.



CONNECTION

ThinkGive Giving Philosophy ([PDF](#)). This reviews the ThinkGive Three, the ideas of which you’ll see in the lessons.

One part of creating a better world is to identify opportunities in our communities where we can make a change. So let's talk about social justice.

Discuss:

- Is social justice a phrase you have heard before?
- What are some things you might know about social justice?

 **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

noun; justice and fairness in terms of how wealth, opportunities, and privileges are shared among different people within a society.

REFLECT

Equality and Equity

Display the image: Equality v. Equity ([PDF](#))

Discuss:

- What's going on in this image?
- What questions do you have looking at this image?
- How does this image relate to your life?
- How does this image relate to social justice?
- This image focuses on the visible injustice of height, what invisible injustices might this image apply to?
- What is challenging about those invisible injustices?

Watch: [Equity and Inequality](#) (3:44)

- How did the video change your thoughts about the image?
- Did the video make you think of times you might have seen or experienced inequity? Inequality?
- What small things could you do in your daily life to create more equity?
- Who could you talk to and motivate to help you create more equity in your community?

 **CONNECTION**

Since the Equality v. Equity ([PDF](#)) image was first created, other iterations have been made: [Equity-Equality-Liberation](#) ([PDF](#)) and [Equity-Equality-chain link fence](#) ([PDF](#)).

 **TEACHER TIP**

Article: "Can we Stop Using the Box Graphic when we Talk About Racial Equity?" ([PDF](#) | [website](#)). Explores the importance of looking at unseen inequities.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Explain that students have the power to identify and create change in their communities. During this Social Justice Spotlight students will learn that they can make a difference in their communities and recognize opportunities to speak up on behalf of themselves and others.

Take Action

Students should try to notice and appreciate kindnesses around them – both ones directed at them and at others. If they can go the extra mile and notice someone standing up for social justice, that’s even better!

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

Discuss:

- What kind of commitment to change could you make to help create more equity in your community?

★ THINK.GIVE THREE

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

Reflection Questions

- What are examples of equity in your communities?
- What are examples of inequities in your communities?
- Why is it important to be aware of inequities that other people experience?

Student Journal Questions

- 🗨 How hard is it to stand up for someone else? Does it make a difference if you are surrounded by others who are just watching it happen?
- 🗨 Imagine having blue eyes was negative, brown was positive, and any other color suspicious. How would this affect you? How would it affect everyone around you?
- 🗨 Why is it important to take action against things that you feel are wrong?

Social Justice Spotlight (middle school) Schedule, Curriculum Overview + Web Training

WEEK 1

THINK: Lesson #1: Introduction (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The definition of social justice.
- The difference between equity and equality.
- The importance of consistent, small actions to make change.

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: Really See Someone (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- What it means to really see someone.
- How empathy can help us genuinely acknowledge someone and build connection.

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students – and teachers – record actions on the ThinkGive website. Then collaborate with peers on the Team Page.



WEEK 3

THINK: Lesson #3: Give to the Environment (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The meaning of environmental justice.
- Different ways environmental resources are shared in and across communities.
- How to identify small actions that can help work toward environmental equity.

GIVE: Students take action!

REFLECT + SHARE: Students – and teachers – record actions on the ThinkGive website. Then collaborate with peers on the Team Page.

Week 4

THINK: Lesson #4: Support a Cause in your Community (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- What are their communities?
- How everyone – at any age – can make a difference with enough determination and support.
- How to identify ways to help a community.
- How small actions can lead to bigger change.

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:

- What they've learned during this Spotlight.
- Patterns that exist in our society and how to break them.
- How they can continue to notice inequalities and step up for other people.

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.

