



Social Justice Spotlight (elementary): At a glance

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials is designed to give you an overview of our Social Justice Spotlight Elementary (recommended for grades 4th/5th). 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 Elementary
(recommended for 4th/5th 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 lesson introduces the idea of social justice and encourages students to identify opportunities in their communities where they can make a change. The story of Laura Wheeler Waring will help them see how societal restrictions can impact people's hopes and dreams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The definition of social justice. - Ways to identify opportunities to make a difference in their communities. - The importance of consistent, small actions to make change. 	<i>"When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something."</i> – John Lewis	Community Equity Justice
Smooth out a wrinkle	Students will learn how their actions – and inactions – can impact themselves and others. The lesson is meant to help students see the importance of taking small actions to uplift others in their lives. Kindness feels more powerful when students step out of their comfort zone and try something new and brave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The power of words and actions. - How their actions – and inactions – can have a real impact on themselves and others. - How kindness and bravery often go hand in hand. 	<i>"What I regret most in my life are failures of kindness. Those moments when another human being was there, in front of me, suffering. And I responded, sensibly, reservedly, mildly."</i> – George Saunders	Kindness Community Social responsibility
Give to someone you admire	Students will learn about the character traits of various social justice leaders, and identify people in their lives who possess the same traits. The lesson will ask students to think about the differences between character traits and skills. Finally, students will explore ways to support, give to, or celebrate people in their lives who they admire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People who they admire in their lives, and the reasons they admire them. - The difference between a character trait and a skill. - How character traits can be nurtured and developed. 	<i>"I admire all the people that shine, even after all the storms they've been through."</i> – Anonymous	Connection Self-reflection Social courage
Give to your community	Students will consider the communities they are a part of and ways they can make a positive impact. The video about Katie's Krops will help them understand how small acts can grow into larger movements. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The communities they are part of. - Inequalities they notice in their communities. - How to take a big problem and create actionable steps to help solve it. 	<i>"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."</i> – Coretta Scott King	Kindness Community Connection
Wrap-up	This lesson is meant to have students reflect on their learning and identify what they have learned during this Spotlight. Also take time to consider ways to keep their momentum moving forward so social justice is on their mind everyday.	<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 step up for other people. 	<i>"Freedom is incomplete without social justice."</i> – Atal Bihari Vajpayee	Identity Self-reflection

Social Justice Spotlight Introduction



grades 4/5



30 minutes

“When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up.
You have to say something; you have to do something.”
– John Lewis

Lesson Summary

This lesson introduces the idea of social justice and encourages students to identify opportunities in their communities where they can make a change. The story of Laura Wheeler Waring will help them see how societal restrictions can impact people’s hopes and dreams.

Students will Examine

- The definition of social justice.
- Ways to identify opportunities to make a difference in their communities.
- The importance of consistent, small actions to make change.



MATERIALS

Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#)
Read-aloud book: [Beautiful Shades of Brown: The Art of Laura Wheeler Waring](#) (9:37)

SHARE

Nothing for the Introduction, no gifts to share yet!



CONNECTION

The ThinkGive giving philosophy ([PDF](#)), the ThinkGive Three, guides students toward giving in a meaningful, impactful way.

THINK • GIVE

Explain: Today we are starting a project called ThinkGive. The project's big idea is that taking action to impact others—noticing others, understanding others, including others—creates a better world.

One part of creating a better world is to identify opportunities in our communities where we can make a change. During this Social Justice Spotlight we'll start to recognize opportunities to speak up on behalf of ourselves and others.

Let's talk about social justice.

Discuss:

- What is social justice?
- What are some things you know about social justice?
- What are some questions you have about social justice?
- To what extent does power, or the lack of power, affect individuals?

Explain: Social justice has to do with the fact that wealth, opportunities, and privileges are often shared unequally in society. It might feel like a big idea, but all change happens through small consistent actions. We've all seen protests and marches and rallies on the news, but between those gatherings, people dedicated to social justice keep helping in whatever ways they can. We all have the power to identify and create change in our communities.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

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

REFLECT

Watch: [Beautiful Shades of Brown: The Art of Laura Wheeler Waring](#) (9:37) (read-aloud book). The book is about a young artist who paints her subjects in shades of brown.

Discuss:

- What barriers did Laura face in becoming a painter? Where did those barriers come from?
- How did she succeed despite the obstacles?
- Laura wanted to paint people who looked like her and her family. Why was that important to her?
- What books, shows, and movies do you watch whose characters are different from you? Why is it important for art to represent different people and cultures?
- How can art connect with social justice?



TEACHER TIP

Article: [Laura Wheeler Waring \(PDF\)](#). Waring is in the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.



DIGGING DEEPER

Lesson plan: "Beautiful Shades of Brown; the Art of Laura Wheeler Waring" ([PDF](#)). Offers supplemental materials and questions about the book.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Take Action

Explain: Try to notice and appreciate kindnesses around you—both ones directed at you and at others. If you can go the extra mile and notice someone standing up for social justice, that's even better!

Things to Consider

- It takes bravery to stand up and make a change.
- It's important to stay aware of your surroundings to help make a change.
- Social Justice can help strengthen a community.

Closing Quote

Use this quote to close out the lesson. The reflective questions could serve as an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)).

"When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something." – John Lewis

- Who do you know who speaks up or acts when they see things happening around them that aren't fair or right?

Deadline

Students give a gift (take an action) by the next ThinkGive class session.

★ THINKGIVE THREE

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

Reflection Questions

- 🗨 When is a time when you have had a chance to stand up on behalf of someone else?
- 🗨 Why can it be hard to stand up for something or someone?
- 🗨 What, if anything, did you do in the coming days to stand up for someone?

Student Journal

- 🗨 If you could change one thing in the world, what would you change and why?
- 🗨 Why does it only take one person to make a change?

Social Justice Spotlight (elementary)

Schedule, Curriculum Overview + Web Training

WEEK 1

THINK: Lesson #1: Introduction (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The definition of social justice.
- Ways to identify opportunities to make a difference in their communities.
- 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: Smooth out a Wrinkle (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The power of words and actions.
- How their actions – and inactions – can have an impact on themselves and others.
- How kindness and bravery often go hand in hand.

GIVE: Students take action!

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



WEEK 3

THINK: Lesson #3: Lend your Voice (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The various ways they can lend their voice.
- The challenges of lending their voice.
- The value of lending their voice.

GIVE: Students take action!

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

Week 4

THINK: Lesson #4: Give to your Community (30 minutes)

Students will examine:

- The communities they are part of.
- Inequalities they notice in their communities.
- How to take a big problem and create actionable steps to help solve it.

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.

