

## Give to a True Friend



Grade: 7



30 minutes

“Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose.”

– Tennessee Williams

### Lesson Summary

This lesson asks students to consider the foundational qualities of true friends, and what makes friendships healthy. They'll also consider how friendships change over time and different ways to maintain friendships. Students will be challenged to consider what a friend might need in a certain situation, whether the gift is planned or spontaneous.

### Students will Examine

- The qualities of a true friend and friendships.
- How friends act as Windows and Mirrors.
- How friendships – and what we need from friends – change as we grow.



#### MATERIALS

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



#### MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Give to a true friend](#)  
Jamboard: [Think about Friendship](#)  
Video: [Character: Friendship Basics](#) (4:29)

## SHARE

### Think about your Last Gift...

Discuss/use Share Tickets ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) to explore how previous gifts connected to the Windows + Mirrors theme.

- How, if at all, did your gift help you look in a Mirror and see yourself more clearly?
- How, if at all, did your gift help you see through a Window to understand someone else (their experience, beliefs, culture, etc.)?
- What character trait(s) did this gift highlight inside of you?
- What character trait(s) did this gift highlight in the recipient?



#### TEACHER TIP

To make the Windows and Mirrors concept more visual, create a board / public space where students can post Share Tickets ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)).

# THINK • GIVE

## Friendship Carousel

Post 4–6 of the following topics on chart paper around the room, or use Jamboard: [Think about Friendship](#).

- Traits of a true friend
- Signs of a healthy friendship
- Signs of an unhealthy friendship
- One thing I believe about friendship
- The responsibilities of a friend
- How are friends Windows and Mirrors for us? (T-chart)

Students write their thoughts on each chart paper, then do a gallery walk to read what their classmates wrote.

## Discuss/Journal:

- Did anything stand out or surprise you?
- How, if at all, has your definition of a true friend changed over the last few years?
- How have your friendships and the things you need from friends changed in the last few years?
- What situations do you find yourself needing a true friend the most?
- How does empathy strengthen friendships?
- What responsibilities do you feel as a true friend?

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# REFLECT

Watch: [Character: Friendship Basics](#) (4:29). As the students watch, they should look for words they use to describe friendships, as well as any new words or ideas.

Use these questions for a classwide or small group discussion, or for a written exercise:

- What words did the video mention that we didn't discuss?
- How can friends be Windows for you? Mirrors for you?
- What are some ways we can maintain friendships?
- What are the most important aspects of friendship – no matter how old the friendship is?

## ★ TEACHER TIP

Video: [Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships](#) (2:16). This video could replace the Character: Friendship Basics video offered.

## ★ CONNECTION

Video: [Good Friends vs. Toxic Friends](#) (5:30)

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# CONNECT + CLOSE

## Take Action

For this prompt, give to a true friend. Students can plan out their action or try being aware of what a true friend might need, then take an opportunity to act.

## Brainstorm

Is there a true friend you can give to who you've taken for granted recently?

## Things to Consider

- Which ThinkGive Three (True / Small / Brave) will you focus on?
- How can we give a true friend what they need instead of what we might need?
- Gifts to a friend can help maintain and strengthen friendships!

## Closing Quote

Use this quote and questions as an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) or a quick way to wrap up the lesson.

*"Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose."* – Tennessee Williams

- What does this quote mean to you?

## ★ THINKGIVE THREE

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

## ★ TEACHER TIP

In the spirit of promoting student agency, we encourage 7th graders to make their own choice about what ThinkGive Three tenet they intend to focus on for each prompt.

## ★ DIGGING DEEPER

Tennessee Williams is regarded as one of the greatest American playwrights. Between the 1940s–60s, he wrote plays including *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

## Sample Gifts

- During a conversation with a friend about a difficult topic, I made an effort to really listen. I put away my phone and paid attention to what she was saying instead of thinking about what I would say back to her.
- Someone said some mean things to my friend. I asked if she was okay and we went to find a teacher she could talk to.
- I had a conversation with a friend who was acting shy. She has a hard time talking to people and I wanted her to feel she belongs.
- I apologized to a friend I wasn't kind to last year. I have felt awful about the way I treated this person, and I finally said sorry to him and told him the reasons I acted the way I did.

## Student Journal Questions

- How can a positive friendship act as a Mirror and Window for you?
- What are the most important aspects of friendship to you?
- Who is a fictional character who provides a Window into what a true friend can be?
- How do our friendships reflect the type of person we are?

## Extensions

### DO

#### Friend Stories

Read the short story: "My Friend Lucy Who Smells Like Corn" ([PDF](#)) by Sandra de Cisneros. Students create their own "Friend Story" by seeking someone out who they look up to and who is different in terms of race, nationality, family makeup, and/or lifestyle. Students can do a simple interview to ask questions about them and then create a story from there.

### READ / LISTEN

Short Story: "My Friend Lucy Who Smells Like Corn" ([PDF](#)) by Sandra de Cisneros

Discuss (note timing of questions):

- Pre-reading question: The story's title is "My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn." What do you think this story will be about?
- Stop after "...yellow blood of butterflies": How do you picture Lucy? Do you think the speaker is the same nationality or race as Lucy?
- Stop after "...she didn't cry neither": Do you think the speaker's family is different from Lucy's? Does the speaker look up to Lucy?
- Stop after "...fold-out chair in the living room": Can you make any inferences at this point as to why the speaker wants to be in Lucy's family? What does the speaker's family situation appear to be?
- Through to end: What do you think this ending shows about the speaker and Lucy's relationship? Does their identifying with each other make it stronger or less strong?
- Post-reading question: Think of a friend who is different from you (race, nationality, family make-up, and/or lifestyle). How do these differences serve as windows for you? What is something significant you learned through these differences?

## READ / LISTEN

Short Story: "All Summer in a Day" ([PDF](#)) by Ray Bradbury

### Discuss:

- Identify a time when you expressed an opinion that your friend(s) disagreed with. Describe what happened and how you felt. Describe how your friend(s) responded to your unique way of thinking.
- Why is it important to be able to disagree with friends? Name one or two strategies you can use to disagree with a friend in a healthy way.

Read-aloud book: [The Giving Tree](#) (9:43) by Shel Silverstein. Students choose a Giving Tree in their own life and write about them, focusing on the sacrifices the true friend has made on their behalf. Students share their writing in large or small groups.

### Discuss:

- What student stories were Mirrors for you?
- What student stories were Windows?
- Did any writing inspire you or make you think differently about yourself as a friend?
- What are the components of strong friendships?