



At a glance: Ripple Effect (grades 3-5)

Welcome to ThinkGive!

This packet of materials provides a comprehensive overview of our ThinkGive® Ripple Effect program, designed for 3rd-5th graders. The program revolves around the idea of the ripple effect and how that can cause our actions to have a far-reaching impact. Through the program, students learn about kindness and are encouraged to make a difference in the lives of others by taking small actions—primarily within their class community.

Included in this packet:

- Scope + Sequence (12-lessons)
- Sample Lesson Plan (Give to a Friend)
- Overview + Impact

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We look forward to connecting with you!
- The ThinkGive Team



Scope + Sequence: The Ripple Effect (ThinkGive® Elementary, grades 3-5)

Students learn about kindness and become empowered to impact themselves and others with small actions. The central theme is the ripple effect and how their actions can have a broad impact because of it. Students' central focus is on others in their class/group; as the program progresses, they start looking outward to their school/larger community.

Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Central Quote	ThinkGive Three	SEL Core Competencies
Introduction	Students are introduced to the ThinkGive Project and the fundamental importance of kindness. They explore how to give non-tangible gifts by doing an activity around sharing compliments, then discuss the ripple effect and how kindness can spread throughout their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What constitutes a "gift." - The ripple effect and how it works with kindness. - The powerful potential of kind actions. 	<p><i>"You can never know the ripple effect you create with one tiny gesture of kindness."</i></p> <p>– Elle Sommer</p>	N/A	Relationship skills: Relationship-building Self-management: Goal setting Social awareness: Empathy
Give to Yourself	Students discuss the importance of self-care and self-compassion. The focus is on caring for their physical self; students consider the importance of a healthy body and how that can affect their emotional self and identify ways to care for their bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ways to care for their physical self. - How caring for their physical self (which impacts their emotional self) prepares them to give to others. - How physical self-care can start a ripple within themselves. 	<p><i>"Be kind to yourself so you can be happy enough to be kind to the world."</i></p> <p>– Misha Collins</p>	TRUE	Self-awareness: Authenticity Self-management: Self-regulation Self-management: Personal agency
Give to a Member of Your Family	Students reflect on the uniqueness of their families and consider how diversity between and within families impacts themselves, others, and their communities. Guide them in understanding that taking family members for granted is normal, and it's important to try to appreciate and connect with family. These two topics will help them identify who in their family to give to—and help them give authentically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ways families are different and diverse. - Their family is unique; how does this uniqueness impact themselves and others? - Why is it easy to take family members for granted? 	<p><i>"Families are like branches on a tree. We grow in different directions, yet our roots remain the same."</i></p> <p>– Anonymous</p>	TRUE	Relationship skills: Relationship-building Social awareness: Interconnectedness Social awareness: Gratitude
Give to a Friend	Students explore the qualities of strong, meaningful friendships. During the discussion, spend time on the value of differences/diversity among friends in providing varying perspectives. Use the book <i>The Other Side</i> or <i>The Gift of Nothing</i> to explore the meaning of friendship and question whether it is more people or things that make us happy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The qualities of meaningful friendships. - How can differences between friends strengthen a friendship? - What are the different ways of giving and receiving in friendship? 	<p><i>"How many slams in an old screen door? Depends how loud you shut it. How many slices in a bread? Depends how thin you cut it. How much good inside a day? Depends how good you live 'em. How much love inside a friend? Depends how much you give 'em."</i></p> <p>– Shel Silverstein</p>	TRUE	Relationship skills: Relationship-building Social awareness: Empathy Social awareness: Perspective-taking
Give Spontaneously	This lesson introduces students to taking action spontaneously. Central to being spontaneous is awareness. In the video "Kindness Boomerang Hits the Rails in NYC," students see the power of spontaneous actions. Finally, they consider how spontaneous action can lead to the ripple effect—and how their actions might start a ripple! The ThinkGive Three focuses on being brave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What it means to be spontaneous. - It is important to be aware and notice opportunities to take action. - How can spontaneous kindness start a ripple effect? 	<p><i>"No single act of generosity remains in isolation. The ripples are many."</i></p> <p>– Sarah Winman</p>	BRAVE	Self-awareness: Confidence Self-management: Risk-taking Social awareness: Empathy
Give to Someone Older or Younger than You	In this lesson, students first discuss what kindness means to them and others. The discussion then encourages them to become more aware of their school community and people they might take for granted. Taking positive action to impact a student in another grade or an adult at the school might require bravery. The scenario activity allows students to consider specific situations and how they might choose to act positively and inclusively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is kindness? - The importance of including people of different ages in their school community. - How their actions impact how others might view them, and how they view themselves. 	<p><i>"When you are kind to others, it not only changes you, it changes the world."</i></p> <p>– Harold Kushner</p>	BRAVE	Relationship skills: Relationship-building Self-management: Risk-taking Social awareness: Empathy

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Lesson name	Lesson Summary	Students will Examine	Central Quote	ThinkGive Three	SEL Core Competencies
Give to Your Community	Students focus on their school community. They consider who is part of that community, what role(s) those people play, and how every member plays an important part. They consider what they might do to give back to their school community. During the discussion, focus on how commonalities and differences among people make the community stronger and more inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The people who make up their school community and how they contribute. - What do they contribute to their school community? - How can they help make their school community stronger and more inclusive? 	<p><i>"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."</i> – Coretta Scott King</p>	SMALL	Relationship skills: Interdependence Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Social awareness: Interconnectedness
Share with Someone	Students learn how sharing is different from giving. Most students will think of tangible items when they think about sharing. Encourage discussion about sharing intangible things and how powerful and challenging they can be. The ThinkGive Three focus is on True; guide students to share authentically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The difference between giving and sharing. - What are ways to share themselves (intangible gifts)? - Why can it be hard to share something personal? 	<p><i>"It is in the shelter of each other that people live."</i> – Irish proverb</p>	TRUE	Relationship skills: Relationship-building Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Self-management: Personal agency
Give to Someone you Admire	Students consider who they admire at school and explore admiring someone for a character trait versus a skill. They discuss and even debate whether skills can be used to develop character traits or vice versa. By the end of the lesson, students have identified a couple of people they admire at school who they might choose to take action to celebrate. This action requires some vulnerability and bravery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who in their school do they admire, and why? - What are the differences between character traits and skills? - Ways that character traits can help develop skills. 	<p><i>"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."</i> – Maya Angelou</p>	BRAVE	Relationship skills: Relationship-building Social awareness: Gratitude Self-awareness: Authenticity
Give to the Environment	The environment is a big topic. This lesson aims to help students understand how to care for our planet by identifying a sizeable environmental problem and reducing it to manageable pieces. Their action should be small; that way, it might become a habit and/or create a ripple effect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What they appreciate about the environment. - How small actions matter in helping the environment. - How to tackle a large environmental issue by breaking it into smaller actions and steps. 	<p><i>"The Earth is what we all have in common."</i> – Wendell Berry</p>	SMALL	Responsible decision-making: Critical thinking Self-management: Goal setting Self-management: Personal agency
Give Your Gratitude	For this final prompt of the Ripple Effect program, students explore gratitude—what it means, how it impacts oneself and others, how one cannot be grateful without being aware, and how taking people or things for granted is its opposite. Genuine gratitude comes from the heart and manifests in many ways. The Gratitude Hearts activity shows students how to start a ripple in a community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What noticing has to do with practicing gratitude. - The importance of feeling and expressing gratitude. - How showing gratitude is the opposite of taking something or someone for granted. 	<p><i>"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."</i> – William Arthur Ward</p>	TRUE	Social awareness: Gratitude Self-awareness: Authenticity

Scope + Sequence: The Ripple Effect (ThinkGive® Elementary, grades 3-5)

Students learn about kindness and become empowered to impact themselves and others with small actions. The central theme is the ripple effect and how their actions can have a broad impact because of it. Students' central focus is on others in their class/group; as the program progresses, they start looking outward to their school/larger community.

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Wrap-up	Today is all about celebrating the positive ripples each student—and the class as a whole—has created during ThinkGive. Students reflect on all the actions they have taken throughout the program and highlight the actions they are most proud of, and that took the most bravery. Finally, they reflect on the “So What?” (why ThinkGive matters) and the “Now What?” (how they can carry forward their learnings).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why ThinkGive matters and what they have learned about the power of kindness and inclusion. - The big ideas they will carry forward with them. - Reflect on the ripple effects of participating in this program. 	<p><i>“The best way to measure how much you've grown isn't by inches or the number of laps you can now run around the track, or even your grade point average – though those things are important, to be sure. It's what you've done with your time, how you've chosen to spend your days, and whom you've touched this year. That, to me, is the greatest measure of success.”</i></p> <p>– R.J. Palacio</p>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception Self-awareness: Confidence Self-management: Persistence

Give to a Friend



grades: 3-5



30 minutes

“How many slams in an old screen door? Depends how loud you shut it. How many slices in a bread? Depends how thin you cut it. How much good inside a day? Depends how good you live ‘em. How much love inside a friend? Depends how much you give ‘em.”
– Shel Silverstein

Lesson Summary

Students explore the qualities of strong, meaningful friendships. During the discussion, spend time on the value of differences/diversity among friends in providing varying perspectives. Use the book *The Other Side* or *The Gift of Nothing* to explore the meaning of friendship and question whether it is more people or things that make us happy.

Students will Examine

- The qualities of meaningful friendships.
- How can differences between friends strengthen a friendship?
- What are the different ways of giving and receiving in friendship?

Pre-Activity Prep

- (Optional) Print *The Other Side* ([PDF version](#)) by Jaqueline Woodson (THINK.GIVE section).
- Hang 4-5 sheets of paper around the room, each with a Carousel on Friendship question or statement written on it (REFLECT section).
- (Optional) Print or digitally share an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) (1/student) (CONNECT + CLOSE section).



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals
Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#))
Chart paper (4-5 sheets)
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Give to a Friend](#)
Read-aloud book: [The Other Side](#) (3:57)
Read-aloud book: [The Gift of Nothing](#) (2:27)

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Option A

Encourage students to pair up with someone they haven't paired up with before. Each student shares their action. As time permits, have one or two students share what their partner shared with the whole group.



TEACHER TIP

If students feel dissatisfied with their actions or have yet to act, remind them that small, consistent actions help develop kindness muscles (ThinkGive Three), so keep trying!

Option B (longer activity)

Maître d'

Call out: Table for (numbers 2-5)

- Students gather in groups based on the number called out and share their actions.
- Call out another number. Students form new groups and share their actions. Continue rounds as time permits.

Discuss:

- Did you notice ways you take your family for granted?
- How was your action True (authentic)?
- In what ways did your action create a ripple? Remember, how taking this action made you feel is also a ripple.

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Option A

Watch: [The Other Side](#) (3:57) ([PDF](#)) by Jacqueline Woodson. This story promotes tolerance, communication, friendship, and open-mindedness. Woodson addresses race relations with two young girls, one black and one white. A fence divides their homes, but they slowly get to know each other by sitting on this barrier.

Discuss:

- Why did the fence stretch through the town? What does the fence represent?
- Why wasn't Clover safe climbing over to the other side of the fence? Why was it safe for Annie to climb over to Clover's side of the fence?
- Why did Annie want to sit on the fence?
- Why didn't Sandra let Annie join the jump rope game but agreed to let Annie join them later that summer when she was with Clover?
- How would you describe the friendship between Clover and Annie?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What other "fences" might exist in friendships?
- How might friendships work through these fences?

Option B

Watch: [The Gift of Nothing](#) (2:27) by Patrick McDonnell (read-aloud book). Explores the importance of friendship, the meaning of gifts, and how people and relationships make us happy.

★ CONNECTION

Students write an acrostic poem about friendship and its meaning in their ThinkGive Journals.

Discuss:

- Was Mooch a good friend when he gave Earl nothing?
- Share when you received or gave the gift of nothing. What was it like?
- Might there be another gift that Mooch gave Earl? How do you know?
- Why are friends important?
- Do friends need to agree on everything, have similar interests, or act in similar ways?

DIGGING DEEPER

- How can a “gift of nothing” be preferred over a material gift?
- Is it OK to prefer a material gift over a “gift of nothing”? How so?

REFLECT

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Carousel on Friendship

Post 4–5 sheets of chart paper around the room. Write a different question or statement from the options below on each paper.

Question/statement options:

- Being a friend is easy. Why or why not?
- What kind of friend do you want to be?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- Why is it important to have friends with varied interests?
- What things can you learn from a friend with a different background than you?

Students form groups and spread out, each standing by a different chart paper. Give each group a different colored marker. Each group reflects on the question posed, writing their ideas on the chart paper.

After a minute or two, groups rotate. Students read through what the other group(s) wrote, agree with (checkmark), and/or add any additional responses.

Continue rotating until all groups have responded to every question, then discuss the questions/statements as a class.

DIGGING DEEPER

Each group makes a “friend poster” with their definition and four examples.

★ CONNECTION

Read-aloud book: [Our Diversity Makes Us Stronger](#) (5:00) by Elizabeth Cole. This story celebrates our diversity and reminds us that it strengthens our friendships and communities. Discuss: What activities or interests do you have that differ from your friends? How does embracing our diversity strengthen our friendships?

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date], look for opportunities to impact a friend positively. Keep your eyes open for small moments when you can take action and be a Daymaker for a friend. Give bravely and create wide ripples that spread through our community!

Brainstorm

- Can you appreciate a friend who has helped you?
- Can you recognize a new friend?
- Can you acknowledge a friend you've taken for granted?
- Can you notice how your friends are feeling and be there to help?

Things to Consider

- The ThinkGive Three focus is on giving a True gift. Be authentic!
- Consider what a friend might want, need, or enjoy.
- Create a ripple effect in your class, school, or community!

Closing Quote

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

"How many slams in an old screen door? Depends how loud you shut it. How many slices in a bread? Depends how thin you cut it. How much good inside a day? Depends how good you live 'em. How much love inside a friend? Depends how much you give 'em." – Shel Silverstein

- What does this quote mean to you?
- Do you think that friendships are made stronger through kindness?

★ THINKGIVE THREE

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



VOCAB

Daymaker: noun; a person that takes time to do something kind for someone else, thus making their day better.



CONNECTION

Shel Silverstein (1930–1999) was an author, cartoonist, and musician, making him a very talented man! Silverstein is best known for children's literature and poems.

Sample Actions

- I apologized to a friend I disagreed with.
- I sat with a friend on the bus because they were all alone.
- I gave a thank you note to a friend who was there for me when I had a challenging situation with my family.

Student Journal Questions

- What's your greatest strength as a friend? What's something you could do to be a better friend?
- Describe a time when you found it hard to be a friend.
- Write about a time you made a new friend. How was this person different or similar to you?
- Describe a time when you took a friend for granted.

Extensions

DO

Potato Activity

Follow the procedure and facilitate the discussion in the Potato Activity ([PDF](#)) "to help youth eliminate stereotyping and recognize the uniqueness of each individual."

People with Disabilities Activity

Run the People With Disabilities activity ([PDF](#)) with your class to have your students "experience a condition similar to what some people with learning disabilities deal with regularly" and gain more understanding (empathy) for friends who may have a learning disability. Prepare for and complete Procedure 1 with accompanying discussion questions. Then, complete Procedure 2 with accompanying discussion questions.

WATCH

Video: [A Fox and a Mouse](#) (6:23). A lonesome fox hunts a mouse—and their relationship evolves as two owls begin to interfere with the hunt!

Discuss:

- What is the relationship between the fox and mouse at the beginning and end?
- What caused the relationship to change?
- What does this tell you about how friendships start?
- Share an example of a friendship that started as a different relationship.

Video: [Same, Same but Different](#) (3:13). These pen pals living in different parts of the world become best friends after realizing they have so much in common.

Discuss:

- What do you think "same, same but different" means?
- What examples of "same, same but different" can you think of among yourselves?
- How can "same, same but different" strengthen a friendship?

READ / LISTEN

Read-aloud book: [Four Feet Two Sandals](#) (8:20) ([PDF](#)) by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed. This book portrays the strength, courage, and hope of refugees worldwide, whose daily existence is marked by uncertainty and fear.

Discuss:

- What is friendship? How can you be a true friend?
- Sometimes, being a friend means giving up something important to you. How do Lina and Feroza show their friendship for each other?
- Lina and Feroza share their sandals. What else do they share?

Read-aloud book: [Be a Friend](#) (1:35) by Salina Yoon, a story about being different from the others around you and how that difference can make you special.

Discuss:

- What small gifts do Dennis and Joy give to each other?
- Do you think they always knew they were giving these gifts?



ThinkGive partners with educators to bring social and emotional learning (SEL) to K-8 youth.

Our mission is to empower youth to take actions that positively impact themselves and others; building character, confidence, and connection. Our programs explore inclusion, identity, empathy, and equity to help youth cultivate self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills.

Why ThinkGive? ---

Unique emphasis on action. Our programs are designed to empower youth to take self-directed and authentic actions that positively impact themselves and others.

We increase access to SEL. We focus on engaging youth who might otherwise not have access to programs like ours. 75% of our partner educators serve under-resourced youth.

→ Check if your school or organization qualifies for free programming funded by our SEL for Every Child Fund at thinkgiveproject.org/fund

Impressive Impact. Programs develop prosocial skills, including connection (with peers, friends, family, teachers, and community), belonging, confidence, and empowerment.

Easy to implement. Our programs are highly adaptable to fit your schedule, goals, and classroom needs. They can be taught as standalone or used to complement and enhance broader SEL initiatives in any environment.

Grounded in research. ThinkGive aligns with state and common core standards and CASEL core competencies.

Exceptional support. To maximize impact on young people, the ThinkGive team partners with educators and provides hands-on support.

Why Now?

Youth mental health has deteriorated nationwide, and this crisis is disproportionately impacting under-resourced youth. In May 2023, the Surgeon General declared loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection a new public health epidemic in the United States. Research shows how teaching youth prosocial behavior is directly associated with positive emotional, social, and academic growth.



OUR IMPACT

STUDENTS REPORT...

84%

will be kinder to others

81%

will be a force of good in their schools and communities

71%

are more willing to stand up for what's right

76%

feel more confident to make a positive impact on their world

84% felt more connected with family, **78%** with community, **77%** with friends

EDUCATORS REPORT...

100%

students feel more empowered that they can be agents of change

85%

students seem more inclusive

75%

students seem kinder to each other



“ThinkGive is a revolutionary SEL program that empowers students to immaterially gift kindness. It strengthens their connections to each other and their communities, shapes them as young citizens, and helps them see the impact of their actions.”

– Dana Meyer, educator, Carlisle Public School

“ThinkGive has and will help me be a more considerate, thoughtful, and compassionate person. Knowing the positive effects I can have on a person is truly amazing.”

– 7th grade student