



UNIT #1 GRATITUDE

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why should I choose an attitude of gratitude?

LEARNING TARGET

I can choose gratitude to help me walk in step with God and improve my overall mental and physical health.

GRATITUDE DEFINITION

Recognizing the goodness around me and the God who gives it to me.

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

- Gratitude.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Build a habit of gratitude through writing.
- Watch an engaging video and discuss the personal connections in it.
- Explore scientific facts about gratitude and identify gratitude practices.
- Read Psalm 138:1-3. Draw a comparison between David's life and their personal lives.
- Write a letter to God thanking Him for the things they are grateful for.
- Connect with their classmates to learn specific ways to be grateful.
- Reflect on the impact of social media on gratitude.

LESSON PREP

Access the following UNIT #1 materials:

- Gratitude slide deck.
- Student handouts.
- *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler: 4 Tips to Connect with Your Generous Student* parent newsletter.



UNIT AT A GLANCE

LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

Watch an engaging video. Explore scientific facts about gratitude and begin a gratitude practice.

LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

Read Psalm 138:1-3. Draw a comparison between David's life and their personal life. Write a letter to God.

LESSON 3: JOIN UP

Collaborate with their peers to identify specific ways to be grateful.

LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

Reflect on the impact of social media on gratitude.

UPON COMPLETION

Send *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* home.





UNIT #1

GRATITUDE



LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

INTRODUCTION & START WITH GRATITUDE

INTRODUCTION

Think about this statement for a moment and consider if you agree or disagree:

You've survived 100 percent of your bad days.

We all encounter challenging days. You might be having one right now. (If that's the case, we hope it turns around ASAP!) However, one thing remains true:

Gratitude changes everything.

Whether your day is at its lowest, rising to the top as the best, or somewhere in between, choosing an attitude of gratitude can turn things around and redirect your heart and mind. God designed you to live this way. As 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV) says, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

God made you, God knows all of your thoughts — what makes your best days amazing and your worst days downright difficult — and yet He still commands you to give thanks. Gratitude is more than a good mood; it's not forced happiness. It's a deep-inside awareness and appreciation of who you are and whose you are. When you are grateful, you recognize the goodness around you and that God has given it to you.

MY GENEROUS LIFE is about looking upward and outward for a life of joy and purpose — a life of Generosity! A grateful heart is a great place to start when it comes to Generosity, so we'll begin each session with a moment to pause and get that upward and outward thinking started.



Questions to activate your gratitude:

- › Who or what is on the constant highlight reel of your life?
- › Who's there for you and makes you feel understood, cared for, and valued?
- › What awesome things in your life do you enjoy and love? How aware are you that those are gifts that God gave to you?



Direct students to complete their first gratitude practice.

Whether it is you, me, the classmate behind you, or someone on the other side of the world, each of us has a unique story to tell.

Throughout MY GENEROUS LIFE, you'll hear stories and gain insight from others. Each story shared will provide you with a unique perspective on how to live a generous life.

These stories serve as a reminder that our lives are influenced by the guidance of God and that each person's journey is uniquely created for them. They also remind us that just because we see someone

daily doesn't necessarily mean we know their full life story. It's about taking a moment and having empathy for what someone has been through.



Show the *GRATITUDE & Gracie* video (located on the slide deck).



DISCUSSION QUESTION

- › How can you relate to today's Spotlight Story?

DID YOU KNOW?

God wants us to live with thankfulness and gratitude. We know that God says that gratitude is what's best for us. But if you need even more convincing, here are seven scientifically proven benefits of gratitude.¹



Show the 7 Benefits of Gratitude slide (located on the slide deck).



DISCUSSION QUESTION

- › Which one (or more) of these seven benefits of gratitude can you relate to the most?

When we take time to be grateful for the things we have and the people in our lives, it can change how we see our circumstances and the world. As middle schoolers, you may be wondering, *How can I possibly stop to think about what I'm grateful for when I have sports, homework, and other stuff?* Don't worry — we got you! Building a habit of gratitude can be done in many ways and can be as short as one minute. Let's look at some together.



Show the Gratitude Practices slide (located on the slide deck).

YOUR TURN

We've learned a lot about gratitude so far and how to set up a gratitude practice. It's now time for you to use what you've learned. Here are a few ways to get started:

- Write down one specific gratitude practice that you'll try for the next week. Gratitude comes in all forms, so if your idea is not on the list, that's okay. Write it down anyway!
- 3 UP Find a Friend: Who wants to be your 3 UP partner? When one of you says, "3 UP," it's code for asking your friend to tell you three things that turn his/her eyes UP to God with gratitude.
- Surprise the adults in your life tonight by telling them three things you are grateful for without them asking, then pose the question to them. Warning: Big reactions, shock, and awe may come your way!



LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION



START WITH GRATITUDE!

What's one thing that made you smile this week? Why are you grateful for that experience?

THAT WAS THEN: INTRODUCTION



Who Am I? is an interactive experience to help students learn unique and relatable characteristics of people in the Bible while discovering just how applicable God's Word, written long ago, is to their middle school lives today. Here are some options for facilitating:

- **Hints:** Display the hints one at a time from the slide deck for students to examine independently, and then submit their answers on paper or through a survey app such as Kahoot! (quietest option)
- **Guessing Game:** Allow some time for students to read the clues and discuss with their peers to identify the person. Make this a competitive game by splitting students into teams or partners. (louder option)

Reveal: Once students have made their guesses, reveal the identity of the biblical figure and give prizes to the winners (optional). Review the clues together, providing additional context if needed. Finish by reading the David recap together as a class.

Hints:

- I was the youngest in my family.
- My family chores were outdoors.
- My kids were not my fans.
- I loved music and poetry.
- My career peaked at the age of thirty.
- My father-in-law tried to kill me. (I had family issues.)
- I tried to cover up my sin. It didn't go well.
- I had a great aim with my slingshot.



Show the Who Am I? hints (located on the slide deck).

THIS IS NOW



You just saw ways that David may have described himself to others. Using the space on your sheet, fill out the I AM template to describe yourself to others.

After students have finished their I AM template, allow them a few moments to share their descriptions with their peers.



Read the David Recap slide with students (located on the slide deck).

David experienced many difficult personal struggles. He often felt uncertain about the ups and downs of his daily life. Sound familiar? Middle school life can take some crazy twists and turns with family life, friendships, and school too! Despite the constant unknowns, David remained grateful. He acknowledged God's presence and goodness through really challenging times. He journaled his most vulnerable feelings, as seen in the Psalms. He expressed his honest emotions, deepest thoughts, and heartfelt gratitude. (Read the psalms of lament for comfort when you're confused, angry, desperate, or scared!)

David saw that God's love is always faithful. David could have chosen to be angry, resentful, or hopeless when his life was out of control. Even in his moments of deepest heartbreak, he let his story be shaped by God's unending goodness. You can let your story be shaped by God's goodness too!

Throughout middle school, you will experience challenges. Friends might come and go. Grades will go up and down. You may struggle to fit in at times and life can feel overwhelming. It sure did for David! But you can follow his lead and lean into God's deep love for you. David's psalms spoke the truth THEN and speak the same truth NOW: God is love, God is faithful, and God will see you through.

Let's read one of David's psalms of gratitude together.

Thank you! Everything in me says "Thank you!" Angels listen as I sing my thanks. I kneel in worship facing your holy temple and say it again: "Thank you!" Thank you for your love, thank you for your faithfulness; Most holy is your name, most holy is your Word. The moment I called out, you stepped in; you made my life large with strength.

— Psalm 138:1-3 (MSG)

David expressed thanksgiving and saw that God's love is always faithful. Even on the worst of days, this psalm reminds us that there is always something to be grateful for. David could have chosen to be angry, resentful, or hopeless. After hearing his story, it would make sense if he remained heartbroken, frustrated, and devastated. But that's not David's story, and no matter what you've been through, are currently experiencing, or what is to come, that doesn't have to be your story either.

Using the format of David's psalm, write a letter to God and thank Him for all of the things you are grateful for. Challenge yourself to press into the discomfort of today to recognize God's love and faithfulness.



Direct students to complete the activity titled Thanks Be to God.

YOUR TURN

Encourage your students to ask a family member this:

- › What situation in your life was hard yet gave you an opportunity for gratitude?



LESSON 3: JOIN UP

DEEPER LEARNING IN COMMUNITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think of a person who has had made a positive difference in your life recently. **What makes you grateful for them?**

GRATITUDE SCAVENGER HUNT

Here's a guarantee for today: You will learn something new about a classmate that you didn't know before! How, you ask? Listen carefully to the following directions!

Today you are going to get a chance to witness just how many different things we can be grateful for in our lives. When the music starts, walk around the room and fill every box on your Gratitude Scavenger Hunt card.



Pass out the Gratitude Scavenger Hunt handout to students. Play music in the background and provide time for students to get to know their classmates.

WRAP UP

It's pretty amazing how much we can learn when we take time to listen to and share with others. As we wrap up our lesson, turn to a partner and share one thing that you learned about someone in the room. It could be something surprising, exciting, or just interesting. Remember, by engaging with one another, you not only learn new things, but you also have a chance to make new friends!

And let's not forget the importance of gratitude! Being grateful is extremely important. Take a few moments each day to appreciate the people and things around you.

YOUR TURN

Before you leave school today, ask someone what they are grateful for.



LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

STEPPING INTO CHANGE & GENEROSITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think about something that you might take for granted (clean water, food, shelter). **Why are you grateful for those items?**



Display photo on the slide deck for students to look at.

ASK STUDENTS:

› **How can social media affect a person's attitude of gratitude?**

Think about this question for a moment, then turn and talk to your neighbor, explaining whether you think social media makes it easier or harder to feel grateful, and why you think so.

As we have discussed throughout this lesson, gratitude is a powerful emotion that can enhance our well-being. However, in today's digital world, social media plays a significant role in shaping how we perceive and express gratitude.

I'm going to read a statement on the slide, and you decide whether this statement is a positive or a negative influence toward feeling grateful while using social media. If it's positive, you'll move to this side of the room. If it's negative, you'll move to this side of the room. Be prepared to have a discussion with your peers and defend your reasoning.



Split the room into two sides: positive and negative. Show the statement on the slide deck and ask students to choose if this statement is a positive or a negative aspect of social media by choosing the appropriate side.

WRAP UP

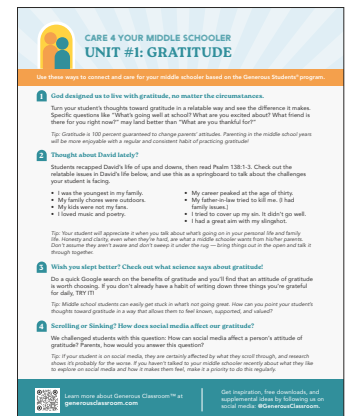
As you can see, social media does play a role both negatively and positively in our experience of gratitude. Social media is not necessarily a bad thing, but it will take intentional consideration regarding its helpfulness or harmfulness for you as you go through different seasons of your life. Try to balance your time on social media and remember that what you see isn't always the true story. By fostering mindfulness and following God's lead for us, we can experience gratitude both online and offline.



Show the My Generous Life Rewind and So ... What Now? slides (located on the slide deck).



Send home the *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* parent newsletter for UNIT #1: GRATITUDE. This can be accessed in the Teacher Portal.





Gratitude Journal

Write or sketch three specific things you're thankful for today.

A large, empty rectangular box with a hand-drawn orange border, intended for writing or sketching a thing to be grateful for.A large, empty rectangular box with a hand-drawn orange border, intended for writing or sketching a thing to be grateful for.A large, empty rectangular box with a hand-drawn orange border, intended for writing or sketching a thing to be grateful for.

Gratitude Scavenger Hunt

Who's grateful? Ask your classmates, "Are you grateful for..." and ask for specific answers to each topic in the boxes below. After you hear their response, have your classmate put their initials on the line. The first person to fill out their Gratitude Scavenger Hunt card and submit it to the teacher wins!

Grateful for my pet _____	Grateful for someone who makes me feel loved _____	Grateful for a skill I have _____	Grateful for something that I own _____	Grateful for a teacher _____
Grateful for the ability to exercise and move _____	Grateful to learn about... _____	Grateful to have traveled to... _____	Grateful for a family member _____	Grateful for a coach or leader _____
Grateful for nature _____	Though it was hard, I'm grateful for... _____	FREE SPACE	Grateful for God's... _____	Grateful for technology _____
Grateful for this place _____	Grateful for this snack _____	Grateful for this friend _____	Grateful to have accomplished... _____	Grateful to serve... _____
Grateful to laugh with... _____	Grateful to wear... _____	Grateful to watch... _____	Grateful for this memory _____	Grateful to look forward to... _____

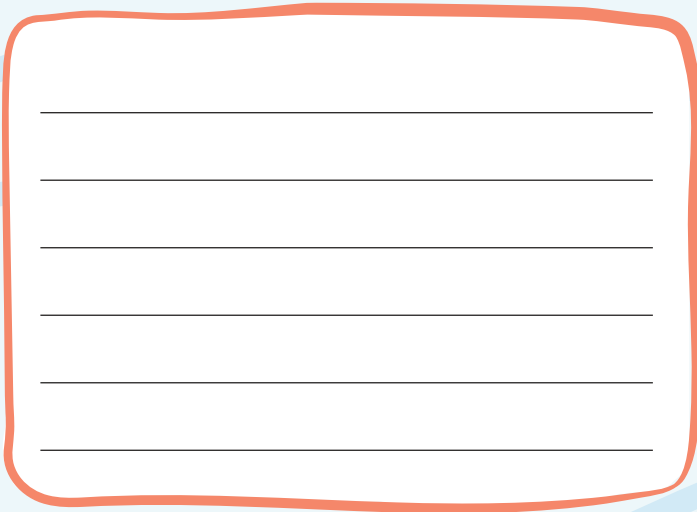
Thanks Be to God

To:

From:

I AM...

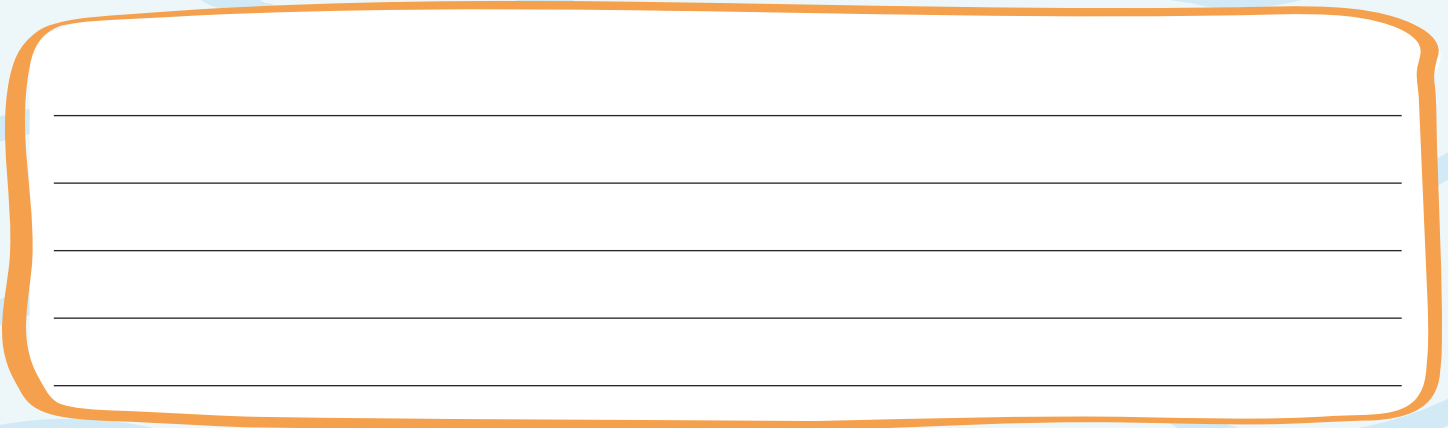
You just saw the ways that David may have described himself to others.
Fill out the boxes below to describe yourself to others.



A rectangular box with a red border and rounded corners, containing eight horizontal lines for writing.



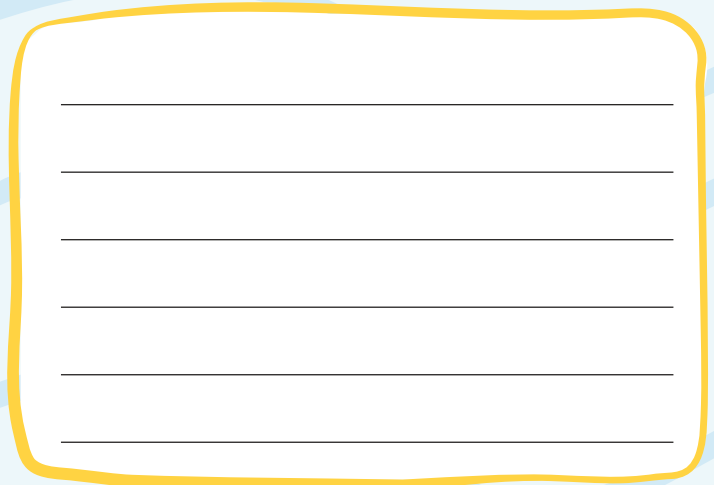
A rectangular box with a blue border and rounded corners, containing eight horizontal lines for writing.



A wide rectangular box with an orange border and rounded corners, containing eight horizontal lines for writing.



A rectangular box with a green border and rounded corners, containing eight horizontal lines for writing.



A rectangular box with a yellow border and rounded corners, containing eight horizontal lines for writing.



CARE 4 YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER

UNIT #1: GRATITUDE

Use these ways to connect and care for your middle schooler based on the Generous Students® program.

1 God designed us to live with gratitude, no matter the circumstances.

Turn your student's thoughts toward gratitude in a relatable way and see the difference it makes. Specific questions like "What's going well at school? What are you excited about? What friend is there for you right now?" may land better than "What are you thankful for?"

Tip: Gratitude is 100 percent guaranteed to change parents' attitudes. Parenting in the middle school years will be more enjoyable with a regular and consistent habit of practicing gratitude!

2 Thought about David lately?

Students recapped David's life of ups and downs, then read Psalm 138:1-3. Check out the relatable issues in David's life below, and use this as a springboard to talk about the challenges your student is facing.

- I was the youngest in my family.
- My family chores were outdoors.
- My kids were not my fans.
- I loved music and poetry.
- My career peaked at the age of thirty.
- My father-in-law tried to kill me. (I had family issues.)
- I tried to cover up my sin. It didn't go well.
- I had a great aim with my slingshot.

Tip: Your student will appreciate it when you talk about what's going on in your personal life and family life. Honesty and clarity, even when they're hard, are what a middle schooler wants from his/her parents. Don't assume they aren't aware and don't sweep it under the rug — bring things out in the open and talk it through together.

3 Wish you slept better? Check out what science says about gratitude!

Do a quick Google search on the benefits of gratitude and you'll find that an attitude of gratitude is worth choosing. If you don't already have a habit of writing down three things you're grateful for daily, TRY IT!

Tip: Middle school students can easily get stuck in what's not going great. How can you point your student's thoughts toward gratitude in a way that allows them to feel known, supported, and valued?

4 Scrolling or Sinking? How does social media affect our gratitude?

We challenged students with this question: How can social media affect a person's attitude of gratitude? Parents, how would you answer this question?

Tip: If your student is on social media, they are certainly affected by what they scroll through, and research shows it's probably for the worse. If you haven't talked to your middle schooler recently about what they like to explore on social media and how it makes them feel, make it a priority to do this regularly.



Learn more about Generous Classroom™ at
generousclassroom.com

Get inspiration, free downloads, and supplemental ideas by following us on social media: @GenerousClassroom.



UNIT #1

GRATITUDE

Lesson Extension

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

Gratitude

6TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

7TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

8TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.



UNIT #1 GRATITUDE

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL RESOURCES

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

DAILY EMOTIONS CHECK-IN

Incorporate an emotional check-in with your students before each lesson or when needed. Emotional check-ins assist children with understanding their feelings and the feelings of others. Download and print our Zones of Regulation/Emotions Check-In located in the Teacher Portal or make a copy of the digital form.

MINDFUL MINUTE

1 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) says, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” It is easy for a student to get caught up in worry, stress, or distraction in class. But God has given us the ability to slow down, release our anxious thoughts to Him, and focus our distracted minds. You can take a moment to give your students room to calm their thoughts and bodies. Mindfulness aims to train the brain to slow down and focus. Choosing to end each lesson with a mindfulness activity can help students feel calmer, happier, and less stressed. It may seem silly initially, but the more they practice, the more they will improve at it.

Today you can lead your students through a breathing exercise. Instruct students to slowly breathe in through their noses and out through their mouths. Complete this exercise three more times.

ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Please find extension lessons and enhancement activities for this unit located in the Teacher Portal. Check back regularly, as our team is constantly creating new lessons.



UNIT #2 GENEROSITY

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I live a generous life on purpose?

LEARNING TARGET

I can define, identify, and live out The 7 Ways of Living Generously.

GENEROSITY DEFINITION

To give, share, and show you care without expecting anything in return.

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

- Awareness.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Build a habit of gratitude through different practices.
- Watch an engaging video and discuss the personal connections in it.
- Identify and define The 7 Ways of Living Generously.
- Read Luke 10:25-37. Draw a comparison between the Good Samaritan and middle school experiences.
- Discover personal Generosity gifts using the Generous Ways Gift Revealer.

LESSON PREP

Access the following UNIT #2 materials:

- Generosity slide deck.
- Student Handouts.
- *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler: 4 Tips to Connect with Your Generous Student* parent newsletter.



UNIT AT A GLANCE

LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

Watch an engaging video. Define Generosity and identify The 7 Ways of Living Generously.

LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

Read Luke 10:25-37. Draw comparisons between the Good Samaritan and the middle school experience. Reflect on a quote by Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

LESSON 3: JOIN UP

Read social scenarios and identify The 7 Ways of Living Generously.

LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

Complete the Generous Ways Gift Revealer quiz and identify the top three Generosity gifts revealed.

UPON COMPLETION

Send *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* home.





UNIT #2

GENEROSITY



LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

INTRODUCTION & START WITH GRATITUDE



START WITH GRATITUDE!

How has gratitude affected your life? What aspects of gratitude are you grateful for?

INTRODUCTION

Think about this quote for a moment:

"Comparison is the thief of joy."

— Theodore Roosevelt

Give me a thumbs-up if you agree with this statement or a thumbs-down if you don't. Take a few minutes and share your opinion on this quote with a partner.

As middle schoolers, it's easy to fall into the trap of comparing yourself to others — whether it's in academics, talent, or the seemingly perfect lives we see on social media. However, it is important to remember that comparison can and will steal our joy.

In this culture of comparison, gratitude and its sidekick Generosity offer you a powerful way to create a shift in mindset and live a generous life meant for purpose and joy.

Generosity is the act of giving without expecting anything in return.

Generosity can help us break the comparison cycle by choosing to lift each other up and not compare our lives to others.

So how do gratitude and Generosity go together? Well, picture this: You're at school, and you see someone upset because they dropped their books. You remember how grateful you felt when someone helped you once, so you choose to help them. This act of Generosity makes you feel joyful and also brightens their day. It's a win-win!

Whether it's money, talent, or time, we have a choice: keep it for ourselves, or give with a grateful heart. Which path will bring lasting fulfillment? Let's look at 2 Corinthians 9:7 for the answer:

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

— 2 Corinthians 9:7

Living a life of Generosity allows us to reflect God's love by sharing our blessings with others. When we choose to live with a grateful heart, we are making a positive impact not only on those around us but on ourselves as well.

SPOTLIGHT STORY

Generosity is a skill we develop over time, not something we are born with. We might naturally want to be kind, but sometimes our brains start throwing out worries and doubts — and we panic, freeze, or head the other way. But if you want to lead a joy-filled and healthy life, **GENEROSITY IS THE WAY!**



Show the *WHAT IS GENEROSITY?* film (located on the slide deck).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- › How can you relate to today's Spotlight Story?
- › Drew talked about The 7 Ways of Living Generously in the movie. Which one of the 7 Ways are you most interested in learning more about, and what about it makes you curious?

DID YOU KNOW?

When people think about Generosity, they often think it's about how much money you can give. While that is one powerful and tangible way to be generous, you will soon find out through **MY GENEROUS LIFE** that there are 7 Ways to Live Generously. Can you guess them? Hint: One of the 7 ways is money!



Have students read the definitions and match them to the correct icon to identify The 7 Ways of Living Generously. After they finish defining The 7 Ways, allow time for a class discussion for students to discuss The 7 Ways and examples of each that they have experienced as the giver or receiver.

The 7 Ways of Living Generously:

- **Thoughts:** Use a thought in my mind to think something kind.
- **Words:** Use what I say to make someone's day.
- **Money:** Use my money, no matter how much, if there is a life I can touch.
- **Time:** Use any moment in my day to put Generosity on display.
- **Attention:** Use my eyes to look and my ears to hear. Listen well and distractions disappear.
- **Influence:** Use the choices that I make to affect the actions other people take.
- **Belongings:** Use the things I have to share. I can do this anywhere!



DISCUSSION QUESTION

- › Which of The 7 Ways of Living Generously brings you the most joy as either a giver or receiver?

YOUR TURN

We've learned about Generosity and The 7 Ways of Living Generously. It's now time for you to use what you've learned. Here are a few ways to get started:

- **Make it a challenge!** As a class, choose one of The 7 Ways of Living Generously and commit to being generous in it. Suggestion: Have a bulletin board designed, and make it a game.
- **Take notice!** Now that you've become familiar with all the opportunities for Generosity, who do you notice around you that lives this out? How does it make you feel? Does it make you want to follow their lead?
- **Have you started a gratitude journal or gratitude practice?** If not, that's okay, there is no better time than now to begin!



LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think of a friend who always has your back. What's one thing they have done recently for you that you are grateful for?

SETTING THE STAGE

Jesus was *the* guy everyone was talking about. People were coming from far and wide to see him, hear him teach, and find out what the excitement was all about. A lawyer in the crowd questioned Jesus, trying to get down to the nitty-gritty of what this whole eternal life thing was. After hearing Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself," the lawyer dug in with a follow-up question, and Jesus didn't mind one bit! Here's what happened next...

Looking for a loophole, [the lawyer] asked, "And just how would you define 'neighbor'?"

Jesus answered by telling a story. "There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man.

"A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I'll pay you on my way back.'

"What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?"

"The one who treated him kindly," the religion scholar responded.

Jesus said, "Go and do the same."

— Luke 10:29-37 (MSG)



To continue the learning, have students complete The 7 Ways of Living Generously Replay: The Good Samaritan.

THAT WAS THEN. THIS IS NOW.

Consider the deeper themes and circumstances we find in Jesus' story and today's culture. Jot down what comes to mind in the categories below for life now in middle school. (A few examples are included to help get you going.)

THEN: ROAD TO JERICO	NOW: MIDDLE SCHOOL
Division and judgment <i>race, religion, hate</i>	Cliques and groups
Crime and robbery <i>unsafe environment, danger, fear</i>	Anxiety, worry, global unrest, and fear of the unknown in the community
Avoiding others, especially outsiders <i>lack of connection, focus on "me"</i>	Bullying, peer pressure, isolation

Disappointment in one another <i>missed expectations, overlooking people</i>	Ostracizing, ignoring
Excuses for unkindness <i>anxiety, fear, comparison, judgment, lack of awareness</i>	Stereotypes
Compassion <i>drawing near to others</i>	Friendship
Initiative <i>stepping up, taking the lead</i>	Facing peer pressure head-on

Isn't it crazy how God's Word, written thousands of years ago, tells of what we still experience today?!

YOUR TURN

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was an influential preacher who lived from 1834-1892. When teaching on the Good Samaritan, he said:

*"I never knew a man refuse to help the poor who failed to give at least one admirable excuse."*²

We all have excuses. What's your excuse for failing to choose Generosity?

For example: "I'm too tired." "I'm really busy." "Everyone needs something from me." "Someone else will take care of it." Just remember:

Two people passed by, and ONE person chose to GIVE.

The Good Samaritan made a *choice*. He might have been tired, busy, preoccupied, or even scared. But he chose Generosity.

You can "Go and do the same..." with The 7 Ways of Living Generously.



LESSON 3: JOIN UP DEEPER LEARNING IN COMMUNITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Consider a challenge you've faced recently. What's one positive thing that came out of that challenge that you are grateful for?



Begin this lesson by showing the video *Students, You Can Be Generous!* (located on the slide deck).

7 WAYS SCENARIO STIR UP



Print out The 7 Ways of Living Generously icons and display them around the room. Read the scenarios one by one to the students (located on the slide deck). Then ask them to choose which of The 7 Ways best applies by standing in front of that icon. Ask students to be ready to defend their reasoning.

WRAP UP

After listening to the scenarios and choosing to stand in front of one of the 7 Ways, you might have noticed that your classmates were spread out in different parts of the room. There was no right or wrong icon to choose from; each scenario could have matched several of the 7 Ways we have talked about. The 7 Ways of Generosity team up to make good things happen. Whether it's spending time helping others, being generous with our words, or sharing the stuff we have, each way helps make our school and community better. Living out The 7 Ways can help you live a life of purpose and joy!



To continue the learning, have students work with a partner to create their own scenarios. Take turns reading them to the class and identifying The 7 Ways of Living Generously.



LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND STEPPING INTO CHANGE & GENEROSITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think of your favorite place to visit, such as the library, park, or a vacation spot. What makes that place special and why are you grateful for it?

GENEROUS WAYS GIFT REVEALER

Pop quiz time! Don't worry, it's nothing to stress about. Without looking, say the 7 Ways of Living Generously out loud.

In his book *Everyday Generosity*, 16-year-old author Drew Formsma said this about Generosity:

"It's about seeing beyond yourself and doing for others."

It can be tricky to know how to get started with a generous life, so we have a tool to help you. The Generous Ways Gifts Revealer is a fun activity that will help you begin to discover how God wired you to be generous in a unique way. Generosity is a journey for everyone at every age, and nobody's journey is the same. There's no right or wrong way; there's just a willingness to step out of your comfort zone and give. Enjoy the process, and write your Top 3 Generosity Gifts in the bubbles when you're done!



Provide time for students to take the Generous Ways Gifts Revealer (printable).

- Instruct them to circle the three statements in each row that sound the most like them.
- Once they have completed all eight rows, have them tally the statements they circled in the color-coded score column. For example: if they circled three yellow statements, they put a 3 in the yellow SCORE box.
- After students have tallied their gifts, put the Generous Ways Gift Key up on the screen.

Discuss your Generosity Gifts with a classmate and think of one specific way you can put them into practice today.



Connect to your math standards by creating a bar graph to document everyone's top Generosity Gifts.

WRAP UP

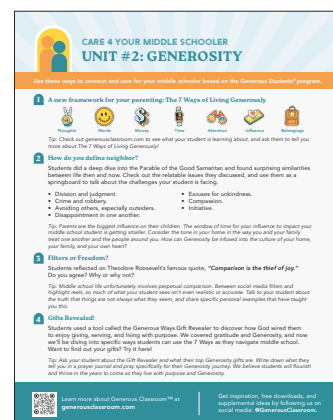
Odds are you didn't know or realize you can be generous in 7 unique ways before you started MY GENEROUS LIFE. You'll probably start to notice Generosity more and find that the 7 Ways are often lived out simultaneously, as we saw in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In a world that is me-focused, isn't it refreshing to know that God has a purpose for your life that is not centered around yourself? It takes courage to be different, but choosing a life of Generosity is something nobody regrets.



Show the My Generous Life Rewind and So ... What Now? slides (located on the slide deck).



Send home the *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* parent newsletter for UNIT #2: GENEROSITY. This can be accessed in the Teacher Portal.





Gratitude Journal

Write or sketch three specific things you're thankful for today.



The 7 Ways of Living Generously

Draw a line from The 7 Ways of Living Generously icon to the matching definition.



THOUGHTS

Use a thought in my mind to think something kind.

WORDS

Use what I say to make someone's day.

MONEY

Use my money, no matter how much, if there is a life I can touch.

TIME

Use any moment in my day to put Generosity on display.

ATTENTION

Use my eyes to look and my ears to hear. Listen well and distractions disappear.

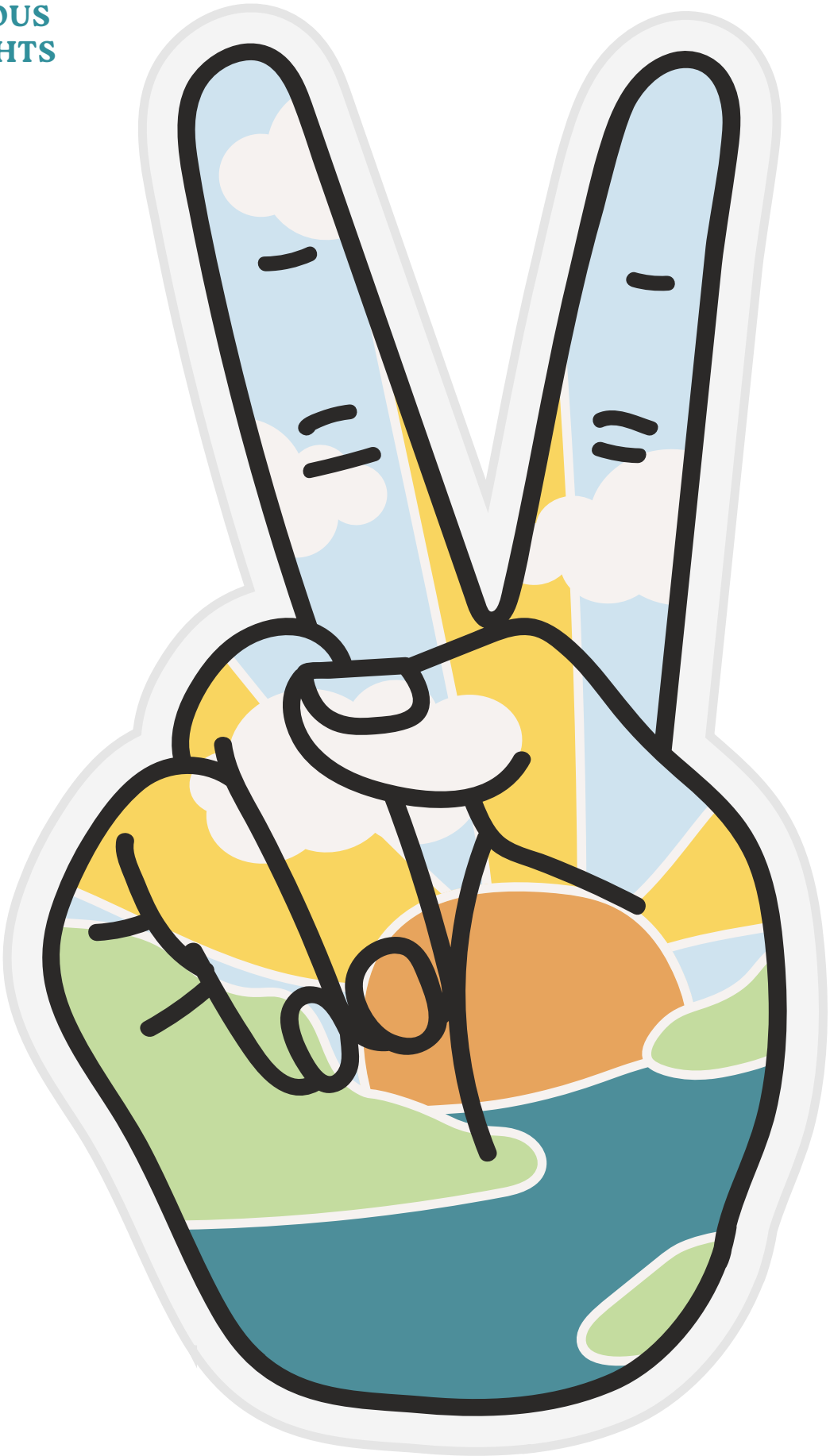
INFLUENCE

Use the choices that I make to affect the actions other people take.

BELONGINGS

Use the things I have to share. I can do this anywhere!

GENEROUS
 THOUGHTS





GENEROUS MONEY



**GENEROUS
TIME**



GENEROUS
ATTENTION



GENEROUS INFLUENCE



**GENEROUS
BELONGINGS**



Generous Ways Gift Revealer

Circle the 3 statements in each row that sound the most like you. Tally the statements you have circled in the color-coded score column.
Example: if you have circled 3 yellow statements, put a "3" in the yellow SCORE box. **What are your Top 3 Generosity Gifts?**

1	I think good things about myself and my future.	I like letting my friends use my things, even if they are new.	I feel good when I support causes with my money.	While hanging out with someone, I am not texting or chatting with someone else.	I take time out of my day to call or text people who mean a lot to me.	I like using my knowledge and gifts to benefit others.	I like to ignore gossip and negative speech.
2	I like giving compliments to people I don't know.	I like to remember the positive things that my parents have said to me.	I share my clothes with my friends and my siblings.	I want to support those in need with money.	I have boundaries for myself when it comes to screen time.	I will help a classmate or friend, even when it is not convenient.	I'm not intimidated by making new connections or friendships.
3	I enjoy introducing my old friends to my new friends.	I like encouraging my friends.	I remember the kind words that my friends have said to me.	If I see someone who is hungry, I will offer them part of my snack or my lunch.	I like thinking of new ways to raise money to help others.	I listen to what my family and friends say, and I don't try to cut them off.	I like to take time to listen to my grandparents' stories.
4	I love spending time with kids who are younger than me.	If I know that two people have similar hobbies, I'll connect them.	Writing letters or thank-you notes is fun.	I keep negative thinking patterns in check when thinking about others.	I always have extra pens and pencils to share in class.	I like using my money to support missions or ministries.	I am a good listener.
5	I look up from screens when people talk to me.	I make sure to hang out with classmates who may not have a lot of friends.	If I see someone new in class, I invite them to sit with me and my friends.	I stay positive in my texts and on social media.	I combat anxious and fearful thoughts with the truth.	I look for ways that I can lend what I have to others.	I see using money as a way to share goodness in my community.
6	I like to save up my allowance so I can treat my friends.	When someone asks me a question, I put time and thought into my answer.	I prioritize spending time with my family.	I love being around people and getting to know them.	Sending my friends upbeat texts makes me happy.	I think that my teachers have good intentions towards me.	I view relationships as more important than things.
7	I'm not overly attached to my stuff.	I look forward to buying my family their birthday gifts.	I make an effort to not be distracted in class.	I find time in my schedule to give back to my church or community.	I like to get people excited about supporting good causes.	I share inspirational posters and quotes with my family and friends.	I believe that God has good plans for me.
8	I think positively about myself even when I make mistakes.	I try to think of fun ways to share what I have with my friends.	Sometimes I surprise people by treating them to a favorite candy or drink.	I make eye contact with people who are talking to me.	I look for ways that I can volunteer or help in class.	I love hearing my friends' ideas and figuring out ways to help them achieve their goals.	I love that what I say has an impact on those around me.

SCORE

THOUGHTS



WORDS



INFLUENCE



TIME



ATTENTION



MONEY



BELONGINGS





CARE 4 YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER

UNIT #2: GENEROSITY

Use these ways to connect and care for your middle schooler based on the Generous Students® program.

1 A new framework for your parenting: The 7 Ways of Living Generously



Thoughts



Words



Money



Time



Attention



Influence



Belongings

Tip: Check out generousclassroom.com to see what your student is learning about, and ask them to tell you more about The 7 Ways of Living Generously!

2 How do you define neighbor?

Students did a deep dive into the Parable of the Good Samaritan and found surprising similarities between life then and now. Check out the relatable issues they discussed, and use them as a springboard to talk about the challenges your student is facing.

- Division and judgment.
- Crime and robbery.
- Avoiding others, especially outsiders.
- Disappointment in one another.
- Excuses for unkindness.
- Compassion.
- Initiative.

Tip: Parents are the biggest influence on their children. The window of time for your influence to impact your middle school student is getting smaller. Consider the tone in your home in the way you and your family treat one another and the people around you. How can Generosity be infused into the culture of your home, your family, and your own heart?

3 Filters or Freedom?

Students reflected on Theodore Roosevelt's famous quote, **"Comparison is the thief of joy."** Do you agree? Why or why not?

Tip: Middle school life unfortunately involves perpetual comparison. Between social media filters and highlight reels, so much of what your student sees isn't even realistic or accurate. Talk to your student about the truth that things are not always what they seem, and share specific personal examples that have taught you this.

4 Gifts Revealed!

Students used a tool called the Generous Ways Gift Revealer to discover how God wired them to enjoy giving, serving, and living with purpose. We covered gratitude and Generosity, and now we'll be diving into specific ways students can use the 7 Ways as they navigate middle school. Want to find out your gifts? Try it here!

Tip: Ask your student about the Gift Revealer and what their top Generosity gifts are. Write down what they tell you in a prayer journal and pray specifically for their Generosity journey. We believe students will flourish and thrive in the years to come as they live with purpose and Generosity.



Learn more about Generous Classroom™ at
generousclassroom.com

Get inspiration, free downloads, and supplemental ideas by following us on social media: @GenerousClassroom.



UNIT #2

GENEROSITY

Lesson Extension

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

Awareness

6TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

7TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

8TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.



UNIT #2

GENEROSITY

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL RESOURCES

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Self-Management

DAILY EMOTIONS CHECK-IN

Incorporate an emotional check-in with your students before each lesson or when needed. Emotional check-ins assist children with understanding their feelings and the feelings of others. Download and print our Zones of Regulation/Emotions Check-In located in the Teacher Portal or make a copy of the digital form.

MINDFUL MINUTE

Begin by inviting students to find a comfortable seated position. Invite them to close their eyes. Encourage them to take a few deep breaths, inhaling deeply through the nose and exhaling slowly through the mouth, allowing their bodies to relax with each breath. Read the scripture below and invite students to repeat the verse in their minds:

Be still, and know that I am God.

— Psalm 46:10

Encourage students to silently focus on the meaning of the scripture passage and how it relates to their own lives. They can contemplate what it means to “be still” and how they can find peace in God’s presence, even amid the busyness of daily life. Conclude the activity by offering a moment of gratitude for the opportunity to connect with God

through scripture and mindfulness. Encourage students to carry the sense of peace they've cultivated throughout their day.

ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Please find extension lessons and enhancement activities for this unit located in the Teacher Portal. Check back regularly, as our team is constantly creating new lessons.



UNIT #3

GENEROUS THOUGHTS

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I build positive self-esteem through Generous Thoughts?

LEARNING TARGET

I can analyze my thought patterns and apply The 3 R's of Thinking to challenge negative thoughts and build positive self-esteem.

GENEROUS THOUGHTS DEFINITION

Use a thought in my mind to think something kind.

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

- Self-Esteem.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Build a habit of gratitude through proven practices and activities.
- Watch an engaging video and discuss the personal connections in it.
- Define Generous Thoughts and understand the importance of keeping thoughts positive.
- Read Romans 12:2 and collaborate with a partner to break down the passage into relatable phrases.
- Understand the concept of "train of thought" and its impact on mindset.
- Learn and apply The 3 R's of Thinking: Reason, Reply, and Renew. Use this strategy to create Generous Thoughts.

LESSON PREP

Access the following UNIT #3 materials:

- Generous Thoughts slide deck.
- Student handouts.
- *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler: 4 Tips To Connect With Your Generous Student* parent newsletter.



UNIT AT A GLANCE

LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

Watch an engaging video. Define Generous Thoughts and understand the importance of keeping thoughts generous.

LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

Read Romans 12:2 and collaborate with a partner to break down the passage into phrases that can be remembered easily.

LESSON 3: JOIN UP

Learn about The 3 R's of Thinking: Reason, Reply, and Renew, and collaborate with a group to identify and reframe negative thoughts.

LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

Capture thoughts and use The 3 R's of Thinking to reframe personal negative thoughts.

UPON COMPLETION

Send *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* home.





UNIT #3

GENEROUS THOUGHTS



LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

INTRODUCTION & START WITH GRATITUDE



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think about a time when God helped you. **How did it make you feel, and what made you grateful for that experience?**

INTRODUCTION

Think about this statement for a moment:

*"If only I can be myself, I'll be satisfied."*³

— Anne Frank

Give me a thumbs-up or thumbs-down if you agree with this statement. Take a few minutes and share your opinion on this quote with a partner. Anne Frank was a Jewish girl who, during World War II, hid with her family in Amsterdam to escape Nazi persecution. Her diary, discovered after she died in a concentration camp, became a symbol of resilience and the horrors of the Holocaust. What do you think Anne Frank was trying to say, and why might she have said this?

Whether you are a brand new sixth grader, middle-of-the-road seventh grader, or counting-down-your-days-till-high-school eighth grader, middle school can be a roller coaster. You are dealing with so many different things every day.

First, you may encounter peer pressure. This can be tough, right? You might be influenced by others to dress a different way, listen to a certain type of music, or behave in a way that you wouldn't normally. Peer pressure might cause you to say, "If only I could be accepted by everyone else, I'd be satisfied."

Next up, you may find self-esteem challenging. This is how you feel inside about yourself, being proud of yourself just the way you are. When your self-esteem is secure, you feel confident and ready to take on the world, but when it's low, you might want to hide away under the covers. Low self-esteem might cause you to say, "If only I could be better, I'd be satisfied."

Another difficulty can be the invisible scoreboard of popularity. You may think that you must hang out with a certain group of people to "score points" and be at the top. But here's the truth, and it's often hard to learn in middle school: *popularity isn't everything*. It might feel great to have a lot of friends or be well-known, but are you building healthy relationships that fill you up and make you feel better about yourself? Are those relationships genuine? Focusing on popularity might cause you to say, "If only I were more like them, I'd be satisfied."



Next time an unexpected block of time presents itself, discuss popularity. Challenge your students to consider what it means, who decides who and what is popular, and how much value they want to place on this possible illusion.

Throughout the Bible, God references our thoughts and how to keep them generous.

In Romans 12:2 we read, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world.” (NIV). What does that mean, “pattern of this world”? It’s like saying, “Don’t follow the crowd and do what everyone else is doing” if there’s something wrong, which is easier said than done in middle school.

This verse means not letting peer pressure, social media, grades, popularity, or how you see yourself and others get in the way of your actions and thoughts. It’s about focusing on the positive instead of the negative. Did you know that God wants us to think kind thoughts about ourselves and others?

Here is something to remember: **YOU ARE ENOUGH JUST AS YOU ARE!** You were created on purpose — for a purpose! This is a Generous Thought! When you use your mind to think something kind about yourself and others, you are being generous with your thoughts. Our thoughts have a big impact on the rest of our lives.

Anne Frank’s quote reminds us that being ourselves is enough. Embracing who you are — the things you love and the things you hope to change — is the best way to power through some of the challenging times you’ll face. Imagine feeling completely content in being true to yourself and everyone around you.

As you probably already know, middle school is not just about your friends, your favorite teacher, or what’s for lunch. Everyone in our school plays an important role in building an educational community. Together, we can begin to create a space where we choose to lift each other with our thoughts, a place to go where we are celebrated and not just tolerated. That’s the power of Generous Thoughts, and it starts by changing your thoughts today!



What does this mean: “Go where we are celebrated and not just tolerated?” Does this apply to any of your current friendships?

SPOTLIGHT STORY

Have you stopped to wonder what other kids your age are thinking? It’s estimated that you have over 6,000 thoughts per day. From thinking about how to tackle homework, what’s for lunch, or the latest music trend, your brain is constantly buzzing with thoughts.



Show the *I Like Bow Ties, Not Bullying* film (located on the slide deck).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- › How can you relate to today’s Spotlight Story?
- › Why do you think Joshua felt positive emotions in a challenging situation?

God has given each of us the ability to have Generous Thoughts. Generous Thoughts is when you use your mind to think something kind about yourself and others. Generous Thoughts also encourages us to be understanding and kind. If someone is feeling sad, you can think *I understand how they feel and I hope they feel better soon*. That’s showing empathy.

DID YOU KNOW?

Negative Thoughts lead to:

- Increased stress.
- Reduced success.
- Depression.
- Relationship challenges.
- Feeling cold, sweaty, or anxious with a rapid heartbeat.

Positive Thoughts lead to:

- Increased lifespan.
- Lower rates of depression.
- Better heart health.
- Better physical well-being.
- Feeling warm and calm with a slower heart rate.



DISCUSSION QUESTION

- › Compare the effects of negative thinking versus positive thinking. Which type of thinking do you think leads to a happier and healthier lifestyle? Why?



Now is a great opportunity to talk to your students about reaching out for support if they are struggling with thoughts of self-harm, depression, or recurring negative thoughts. Provide time to discuss where students can turn if they need help and guidance based on your school's protocol, or choose to invite a counselor or professional into your classroom to discuss these topics.

Read this message to your students and display it on the screen:

As you go through middle school and life, it's important to realize that everyone faces challenges, and sometimes those challenges can affect your mental health. You never have to feel alone. Reaching out for help is not a sign of weakness but rather a sign of strength. Whether you seek out a teacher, a counselor, a church leader, a principal, or a family member, there are always people who want to support you. YOU ARE VALUED, YOU MATTER, AND YOU ARE IMPORTANT!

YOUR TURN

So far, we've learned about the importance of keeping our thoughts generous. It's now time for you to use what you've learned. Here are a few ways to get started:

- Turn your thoughts into artwork! Grab a piece of paper and coloring utensils, or use a journal you write in frequently. Write and illustrate different thoughts that come to mind. Sometimes it feels good to get thoughts out of your head in a new way.
- Remind yourself that **YOU ARE ENOUGH!** Write positive affirmations to yourself on the bathroom mirror, in your journal, or even on the background of your phone. Use the sentence starter, "I am..." and post them in places you'll see often.
 - Examples: I am enough. I am smart. I am strong. I am a good friend.
- Check in with yourself. How are you using The 7 Ways of Living Generously toward yourself or others? How is your gratitude journal going?



To continue the learning, have students write a poem in the same format that Joshua recited at the end of the video. A template can found in the portal.



LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION



START WITH GRATITUDE!

What/Who are you grateful for that makes you laugh?

THAT WAS THEN: ANCIENT ROMAN THINKING

What does God's Word, written over 2,000 years ago, have to say about how to think, how to transform our thoughts, and how to build positive self-esteem?

Let's see what the apostle Paul dealt with when he wrote the Book of Romans, a letter to the believers/church living in Rome, around AD 57. Then compare and contrast that life with our world and thinking today.



Read over THAT WAS THEN as a class, then provide time for students to quietly reflect on the My World of Thinking ... NOW located on the slide deck. Provide students time to work with a partner or to complete a class discussion to highlight the things they are witnessing.

Place: Ancient Rome

Year: AD 57

- A divided community (between Jewish and non-Jewish), a need for unity.
- People are lost in sin.
- Cultural divisions and disputes, disagreements.
- This way of life is not going well.
- When we're not under God's loving Gospel, it just keeps getting worse.
- The solution: Jesus.
- The tool: the Gospel or Good News.
- The choice: inside-out change.

It's amazing to look back at ancient Rome and then compare it to our world today. What similarities and differences do you notice in the patterns of the world? Back then, just like now, people were divided, they made mistakes, and they struggled to keep their thoughts generous. But there is a way to make things better — and that's through Jesus. He isn't from some old, make-believe story from a long time ago. His message and the good news can change our lives.

INSIDE OUT REROUTE



Display the Romans 12:2 (MSG) verse (located on the slide deck).

Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

— Romans 12:2 (MSG)



If time allows, read the NLT and NIV versions with your class (located on the slide deck).



Place students in small groups and assign them one of the seven segments from *The Message* passage in Romans using the handout from the portal.

Instruct students to summarize the sentence/phrase into 1-3 words maximum, then write their summary on the back of the paper.

Encourage students to put Romans 12:2 into their own words and to use their language to help them remember this passage. Some examples are written in bold below.

1. *Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.*
Gratitude, Thank God every day, Choose Jesus, Receive God's love
2. *Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking.*
Stop and think, Do I conform? Push pressure back, Think for yourself
3. *Instead, fix your attention on God.*
Focus on God, Concentrate on Him, Read your Bible, Pray
4. *You'll be changed from the inside out.*
Through and through, True change, Heart and mind, Think like Him
5. *Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.*
Holy Spirit led, Hear His voice, Able to listen, Follow His plan, Hear and act
6. *Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity,*
Be different, Choose God's way, Think above culture, Don't give in
7. *God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*
Thrive in thoughts, He loves me, God's best, Let Him transform

YOUR TURN

Have you ever realized that you can choose your thoughts?

A Christian author and minister wrote a best-selling book all about this, and here's what she says:

"One of the greatest revelations of my life is: I can choose my thoughts and think things on purpose. In other words, I don't have to just think about whatever falls into my mind."

— Joyce Meyer
Battlefield of the Mind

What if you gave yourself permission to throw out the unhelpful thoughts? With God's help, you can choose purposeful and Generous Thoughts, even when the patterns of the world around you are empty and telling you otherwise.



Using the short phrases your class came up with, or that you come up with on your own, write yourself a personal, encouraging, truth-filled Inside Out Reroute using Romans 12:2. If you find that you're getting lost in behaviors and thinking patterns that are unhelpful and obviously not from God, come back to this page and read it again. Invite God to renew your mind and He *will*.



LESSON 3: JOIN UP

DEEPER LEARNING IN COMMUNITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

What is a thought you've had recently that you are grateful for?

TRAIN OF THOUGHTS



Begin this lesson by showing the train track slide and allowing students a few minutes to look at it.

ASK STUDENTS

› Have you ever heard the phrase *train of thought*? What do you think it means?

Just like a train follows its tracks to head to different destinations, our thoughts follow a similar pattern. Sometimes they tend to move fast and straight, and other times they are slow and winding. Let's face it: We live in a world where there is a lot to think about.

- We have social media telling us how to dress, how to act, or what music to listen to.
- We have phones buzzing with notifications demanding our attention at that exact moment.
- We have peer pressure and a popularity contest knocking on our doors, reminding us that we need to be different than we are to fit in.

With all this noise, it's no wonder our train of thought can sometimes feel like it's on a high-speed chase going the wrong way into negative thinking.

But here's the great thing. Among all of this chaos, you have the power to change your thoughts and get on the right track. In the film *I like Bow Ties, Not Bullying.*, Joshua's experience allowed him to overcome difficulty and find purpose. This started with his thoughts. When you lean into God and His Word, you have the power to renew your negative thinking and set you on a path to Generous Thoughts: when you use your mind to think something kind.

REASON, REPLY, RENEW

So how do we renew our thoughts? We begin by focusing on The 3 R's of Thinking: *Reason, Reply, and Renew*. Let's break these down.

- **Reason:** Is this thought a fact or fiction? Thoughts are not always facts! Just because we think something, it doesn't make it true. Challenge your thinking: What evidence do you have to prove that the thought you had was true?
- **Reply:** If a friend said this thought to you and asked you for your opinion, what would you say back?
- **Renew:** You have the power to renew your thoughts. By actively choosing to focus on Generous Thoughts and seeking God's wisdom, you can replace your thoughts. Renewed thoughts help to build positive self-confidence.

One of the patterns that middle schoolers often struggle with is the number of likes, follows, comments, or friends they have on different social media platforms.

Let's look at an example and how we can use The 3 R's of Thinking to challenge negative thoughts.

THOUGHT: *I'm only as popular as the number of friends I have or the number of likes and comments that I get on social media.*

Reason: Is it a fact that the number of likes or comments I have on social media determines how popular I am? Or is it more important to have friends with whom I have meaningful connections? It's about the meaningful connections I have made and who values me as a person.

Reply: If a friend said this to me, I would remind them that popularity isn't important. It is about being true to yourself and creating real human connections beyond social media.

Renew: Take those thoughts and turn them around, remembering that your worth goes way beyond social media. Turn them into a Generous Thought: I know my value is not defined by social media, and I want to have true friends.



After reading the examples, pair students in groups of 2-3 (depending on class size) and assign each group one of the thoughts from the printout. Ask them to read the thought together, and identify where this thought might come from. Next, have them apply The 3 R's of Thinking to change the negative thought to a Generous Thought. End this activity by having a class discussion on the importance of keeping our thoughts generous.



LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

STEPPING INTO CHANGE & GENEROSITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

What is one generous thought you've had this week about yourself?

REFLECT & RESPOND

We began this lesson by looking at the phrase *train of thought*. Take a moment and reflect on where your train of thought has been recently. Have you had thoughts that have been on high-speed chases into negative thinking? Or are you learning to use your mind to think something kind and keep your thoughts generous? Maybe you are jumping from train to train, from negative to positive thinking. Whichever direction your thoughts are headed, just know Generous Thoughts take practice.

Today, you'll get the chance to identify your thoughts and apply The 3 R's of Thinking.



Instruct students to lay down their heads and close their eyes, then encourage them to think about the first thing that comes to their minds.

After a few minutes, ask them to open their eyes and write down their thoughts in the bubbles on their student handout. Then, have them circle one of their negative thoughts.

Ask students to apply The 3 R's of Thinking: Reason, Reply, and Renew, to reframe their thoughts from negative thoughts to Generous Thoughts. Display the slide on the board to remind them of The 3 R's of Thinking.

WRAP UP



Show the My Generous Life Rewind and So ... What Now? slides (located on the slide deck).



Send home the *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* parent newsletter for UNIT #3: GENEROUS THOUGHTS. This can be accessed in the Teacher Portal.

CARE 4 YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER
UNIT #3: GENEROUS THOUGHTS

Use these ways to connect and care for your middle schooler based on the Generous Student® program.

1 Where is your train of thought?
Are your thoughts on a straight track to positivity or a high-speed chase heading toward negative thinking? This lesson provided students with an opportunity to reflect on the place each of thought and discover that our thoughts can lead us down certain paths that trigger different feelings and actions. Students learned that they have the ability to tell their mind not to stop at certain train stops that would cause negative thinking.
Tip: Ask your student, "Where have your thoughts been?" This simple question can open a conversation about the state of their thoughts and help them become more aware of their positive and negative thoughts.

2 Generous Thoughts: Use a thought in my mind to think something kind.
Guide your student to come up with positive affirmations in the present tense: I am enough. I am loving. I am kind. Make this a family activity and write out positive affirmations together.
Tip: Encourage an environment with your student with open lines of communication. This provides them a place to feel confident to express their thoughts, emotions, and feelings.

3 These darn patterns of this world!
Your student is living in a world that tells them how to show, how to act, what music to listen to, how to be popular at parties, and the list goes on. But, we can take heart and trust what Romans 12:2 tells us: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will."
Tip: Discuss the difference between the words *conform* and *transform* with your student. Encourage your student to consider one area of their life how they might be conforming to the patterns of the world, and if so, how they can be transformed by renewing their mind.

4 The 3 R's of Thinking
In this lesson, students learned about the 3 R's of Thinking: Reason, Reply, and Renew, to help rewrite negative thinking.
Tip: When you notice that your student's thoughts are negative, encourage them to use The 3 R's of Thinking Model that your student so they can see you choosing to have a sound mind even when it's difficult.

Learn more about Generous Classroom™ at generousclassroom.com

Get inspiration, free downloads, and supplemental ideas by following us on social media: [@GenerousClassroom](https://www.instagram.com/generousclassroom)



Gratitude Journal

Write or sketch three specific things you're thankful for today.



Poem Writing Activity

Read the poem from the *I Like Bow Ties, Not Bullying* video. Then write your own poem in the same format that Joshua recited.

Why Bully Me?

Bully me, bully me.
Why is this happening to me?
Bully me, bully me.
I thought you saw a friend in me.
Why do you bully me?
Am I your enemy?
Like a tortoise in a shell, I'm too afraid to tell.
Why me, why me?
Sometimes I don't want to be me.
Bully me, bully me.
How about being kind to me?
What should memories of school be for me?
Should it be of the ones who bullied me?
Or should it be of the
Wonderful, incredible, intelligent me?

_____’s Inside Out Reroute

Using the short phrases your class came up with, or that you come up with on your own, write yourself a personal, encouraging, truth-filled Inside Out Reroute using Romans 12:2. If you find that you're getting lost in behaviors and thinking patterns that are unhelpful and not from God, come back to this page and read it again. Invite God to renew your mind and He *will*.

[illegible]

Romans 12:2 – *The Message* Version



**Embracing what God does for you is
the best thing you can do for him.**



**Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture
that you fit into it without even thinking.**



Instead, fix your attention on God.



You'll be changed from the inside out.



**Readily recognize what he wants
from you, and quickly respond to it.**



**Unlike the culture around you, always
dragging you down to its level of immaturity,**



**God brings the best out of you,
develops well-formed maturity in you.**



The 3 R's of Thinking Activity

I never look as good as my friends.

Numbers are not my thing. I'm horrible at math.

Maybe if I join the volleyball team, I'll be popular.

**Something must be wrong with
me if she's upset with me.**

**I think I laugh too loud, and people
always look at me when I do.**

**I don't deserve the lead role in the school play;
they should have given it to someone else.**

**Maybe if I dress like them or do my
hair differently, they will like me.**

**School photos are tomorrow; I have to remember not
to smile big because people will make fun of my smile.**

The 3 R's of Thinking Activity

I don't want to ride the bus home because I don't want anyone to see that my house is not as big as everyone else's.

My family can't afford to keep up with the latest trends, and I'm scared people will make fun of me.

I get nervous walking into the cafeteria because I don't have a group of friends to sit with.

Whenever I'm around a group of people, I always feel like the odd one out.

I have to be the tallest and biggest because people will make fun of me if I'm not.

Everyone's life seems so perfect, and mine feels like a disaster.

It doesn't matter what I do, I'll never be happy with the way I look.

The 3 R's of Thinking



Thought: _____

Reason: _____

Reply: _____

Renew: _____



CARE 4 YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER

UNIT #3: GENEROUS THOUGHTS

Use these ways to connect and care for your middle schooler based on the Generous Students® program.

1 Where is your train of thoughts?

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Tip: Ask your student, "Where have your thoughts been?" This simple question can open a conversation about the state of their thoughts and help them become more aware of their positive and negative thoughts.

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Guide your student to come up with positive affirmations in the present tense: *I am enough. I am loving. I am kind.* Make this a family activity and write out positive affirmations together.

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Your student is living in a world that tells them how to dress, how to act, what music to listen to, how to be popular or famous, and the list goes on. But, we can take heart and trust what Romans 12:2 tells us: *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.*

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In this lesson, students learned about The 3 R's of Thinking: Reason, Reply, and Renew, to help combat negative thinking.

Tip: When you notice that your student's thoughts are negative, encourage them to use The 3 R's of Thinking. Model this for your student so they can see you choosing to have a sound mind even when it's difficult.



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UNIT #3

Lesson Extension

GENEROUS THOUGHTS

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

6TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

7TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

8TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

GENEROUS HABIT

Self-Esteem.



UNIT #3

GENEROUS THOUGHTS

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL RESOURCES

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, and Self-Management.

DAILY EMOTIONS CHECK-IN

Incorporate an emotional check-in with your students before each lesson or when needed. Emotional check-ins assist children with understanding their feelings and the feelings of others. Have students identify their emotions by pointing to a picture and explaining how they feel. Download and print our Zones of Regulation/Emotions Check-In that is in the Teacher Portal.

MINDFUL MINUTE

Today's mindfulness activity is called Rainbow Breathing.

Let's take a mindful minute with Rainbow Breathing. Close your eyes and imagine a beautiful rainbow arching above your head. Picture its vibrant colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet—shining brightly.

Now, take a slow breath in through your nose, imagining the warm and cozy red of the rainbow filling you with warmth. As you exhale through your mouth, imagine blowing away the fluffy clouds above you.

Continue breathing in each color of the rainbow, one by one, and as you exhale, keep blowing those clouds away. Feel the calm and happiness growing inside you.

As you breathe, imagine sending each worry and care to God, trusting that He will take care of you because He loves you so much. When you're ready, gently open your eyes, carrying that calm and trust with you.

ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

GENEROUS THOUGHTS CHALK ACTIVITY

Provide students time to brainstorm words of encouragement. During recess or a brain break, allow students to write and illustrate their words of encouragement on the sidewalk. If it's a cold day out, allow them to use a whiteboard or the class chalkboard.



UNIT #4

GENEROUS WORDS

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do the words I use impact those around me?

LEARNING TARGET

I can understand that the words I use can impact people around me positively or negatively.

GENEROUS WORDS DEFINITION

Use what I say to make someone's day.

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

- Impact of Words.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Build a habit of gratitude through different practices.
- Watch an engaging video and discuss the personal connections in it.
- Define Generous Words and understand the impact their words can have on those around them.
- Read Proverbs 12:18. Compare how the words of wisdom from the Bible are still relevant to their daily lives.
- Collaborate with peers to analyze images and learn how to defuse and reframe a situation with Generous Words.
- Self-reflect and learn the importance of taking responsibility for their words and apologizing when necessary.

LESSON PREP

Access the following UNIT #4 materials:

- Generous Words slide deck.
- Student handouts.
- *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler: 4 Tips To Connect With Your Generous Student* parent newsletter.



UNIT AT A GLANCE

LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

Watch an engaging video. Define Generous Words and understand how positive and negative words can impact others.

LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

Read Proverbs 12:18. Compare how the words of wisdom from the Bible are still relevant today.

LESSON 3: JOIN UP

Collaborate with peers to analyze images and learn how to defuse and reframe a situation with Generous Words.

LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

Write an apology note and reflect on the power of saying, "I'm sorry."

UPON COMPLETION

Send *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* home.





UNIT #4

GENEROUS WORDS



LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

INTRODUCTION & START WITH GRATITUDE



START WITH GRATITUDE!

What is one thing you like about yourself that others may not know or notice about you?

INTRODUCTION



Begin this lesson by handing students a sticky note or piece of paper and displaying the phrase below on the screen:

Is the following saying true?

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

It's an expression you've all heard at some point in your lives. But let's be real: The words you say to those around you can have a positive or negative impact that might even last a lifetime.

Let's try an experiment. On one side of your paper, write down words or phrases you've heard said about you or someone else that made you happy; these are "positive" words. On the other side of your paper, write down words or phrases that were said about you or someone else that made you sad; these will be "negative" words.



Remind students not to put their names on the paper, that nobody will know or see what they wrote, and that these papers will be destroyed once this activity ends.

Once students have finished their papers, collect them, shuffle them up, and read them to the class.

ASK STUDENTS

- › How did it feel to hear the positive words said about your classmates?
- › How did it feel to hear the negative words said about your classmates?
- › Which type of words do you believe has a greater impact on a person: positive or negative?
- › Why do you think so?
- › Did you notice a difference in how your body reacted to the positive words vs. the negative words you heard?

Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett, a psychologist (someone who works to help others navigate life) and neurologist (a doctor who studies the brain and nervous system), found something super interesting in her research on the impact of words. She discovered that if you receive a kind text or positive word from your friend, it will change your heart rate, breathing, and how your body works in a positive way (and you don't have to be near each other to experience this!). On the other hand, if someone sends you a negative text or you see a negative comment posted about you on social media, it can immediately make your body feel uneasy and nervous.⁴

Let's be honest: Middle school can be a weird time, and if we look around long enough, we notice

that there is more drama, rumors, and gossip than on a reality TV show. It's easy to underestimate the negative impact of the words you say when everyone around you is probably saying similar things. It might feel like it's the normal thing to do. Yet Proverbs 12:18 tells us this:

Careless words stab like a sword. But wise words bring healing.

— Proverbs 12:18 (ICB)

This verse reminds us that people will indeed make careless remarks about others. Just like a paper cut or a scrape to the knee can cause harm, words can also create wounds deep inside that are invisible to the eye. You may not realize it, but careless remarks are often acceptable and normal in our everyday lives. Sarcasm or sharp and harsh comments in a demeaning tone are used to put people down. Sometimes, they come in the form of questions loaded with judgment and harmful assumptions.

While you may notice that some people use words that tear others down, *you* can be the difference maker by sharing words that bring healing. When you use the words you say to make someone's day, like complimenting them, you are not only being generous with your words but also brightening their spirits. This impact, which might seem minimal then, could last for years. Just think, you could be why someone's brain creates new neural pathways and a new outlook on the world around them! That sounds like a generous thing to do.

Do you see a pattern in The 7 Ways of Living Generously? Our *thoughts*, which we learned to keep generous and positive in our last lesson, can turn into *Generous Words* that positively impact others. *Generous Words* is when we use what we say to make someone's day.

SPOTLIGHT STORY

When people use *Generous Words* with you, they are using what they say to make someone's day. Check out this story about how these leaders and elementary students made *Generous Words* available to anyone, at anytime.



Show the Peptoc Hotline video (located on the slide deck).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- › How can you relate to today's Spotlight Story?
- › Why do you think Peptoc turned into a big thing with half a million calls?
- › Do you think restoring confidence in others is a way to use *Generous Words*? Why or why not?



As a class, call the Peptoc Hotline and experience it together. Dial 707-8PEPTOC (707-873-7862)

DID YOU KNOW?

A single word has the power to change one's reality. Whether that word you say to others inspires, harms, or heals them, one word has the power to make a huge impact.

Negative/Harmful Words:

- Release stress hormones in the person receiving them.
- Whether spoken, heard, or thought, can cause long-term anxiety.
- Can make someone angry, sending alarm messages through the brain and shutting it down to logical reasoning. This is why we often see fights and arguments when negative words fly.⁵

Positive/Healing Words:

- Increase reasoning and strengthen our frontal lobe. The frontal lobe of your brain is responsible for how you think and move, and it also controls how you talk and interact with others.⁶
- Can improve physical performance.
- Trigger high levels of dopamine (which makes you feel good), oxytocin (which helps you build relationships), and endorphins (which are natural mood lifters), all of which give us a sense of well-being.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION**

- › Who leaves you feeling refreshed and encouraged during or after a conversation? Turn to a partner and discuss who that person is, what they do and/or say, and how they make you feel.

YOUR TURN

We've learned a lot about Generous Words so far. It's now time for you to use what you've learned. Here are a few ways to get started:

- Practice using Generous Words toward yourself by finishing this statement: I am valuable because _____.
- The brain is a fascinating organ. Set aside time to ask your science teacher or do your research about how words impact the way your brain is shaped and functions.
- We learned that using Generous Words toward others can brighten their day. Choose three people today and compliment them (at school, home, practice, or other places you might go). Who knows? You may even get a compliment back!

**LESSON 2: THEN & NOW****SCRIPTURE CONNECTION****START WITH GRATITUDE!**

Who in your life gives you good advice and is someone you can turn to for help with big decisions or problems you're facing?

THAT WAS THEN: FLAWED PEOPLE & A FAITHFUL GOD

What does God's Word, written over 2,000 years ago, say about how we speak to others, how to discern between positive and negative words, and ways to build healthy relationships with Generous Words?

Meet Solomon! Remember David, the giant-defeating shepherd and king who taught us a thing or two about gratitude? Well, after David died, his son Solomon became the king of Israel. Like everyone we encounter in the Bible, God used Solomon for His good, and Solomon was nowhere near perfect! Here are some fun facts and flaws about Solomon:

- True-story quote from Solomon: "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other!" (1 Kings 3:25 NLT). Check out 1 Kings 3:23-27 to hear more about that crazy story!
- He was so wealthy that the Bible says he "made silver and gold as common as rocks" (2 Chronicles 1:15 MSG).
- He had 700 wives and found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time, ultimately being

influenced to turn away from the Lord. (See 1 Kings 11:3 NLT.)

- Even though God appeared to Solomon twice and told him not to fool around with other gods, Solomon faithlessly disobeyed God's orders. (See 1 Kings 11 MSG.) Could God have been any clearer?!
- When God asked Solomon what he wanted from Him as a king, Solomon asked for wisdom and knowledge to lead well. God delivered on that! Solomon is known for being the wisest man that ever lived! The Bible says, "Kings came from all over the world to be with Solomon and get in on the wisdom God had given him" (2 Chronicles 9:22-24 MSG).



DISCUSSION QUESTION

- › When you need advice, where do you look, or who do you turn to?

Nowadays, a quick Google search is often the first place a person goes for answers. A map app gives us directions, and a YouTube video teaches us how to do something we desire to learn. Influencers of all kinds are plentiful on your social media feed, whether you want to know more about styling a great outfit, perfecting your sports, or knowing about the newest trends.

But what about WISDOM? Insight and knowledge for what matters most in your life should come from a trusted, unchanging, steady, and enduring source. That's where the Bible comes in. It may not be the same flashy experience as scrolling through a social media feed, but it has stood the test of time, especially regarding Generous Words.

Solomon's God-given wisdom provides specific and clear direction for us about Generous Words. Today, we'll examine what he tells us and learn more about the impact our words have on others.

You can think of Solomon as the most followed, most watched, and best-known influencer who has ever lived. People wanted to know what he thought, what he recommended, and what he was doing. They would have watched his every move if they could have! And get this: All of his content was *in person* only. The wisdom God gave him was passed along by word of mouth when spoken from person to person. Thankfully, much of the wisdom God poured into Solomon can be found in the book of Proverbs. Today's your chance to decide if Solomon was an influencer you would choose to follow. Think of it this way: After hearing Solomon's content, would you hit the "follow" button?

THIS IS NOW: PROVERBS GETS PERSONAL!



Place students in pairs and have them choose one of the proverbs on the page and complete the activity together. If time allows, have pairs share their bottom line with the class.

YOUR TURN

Let's take a moment to sit in that last proverb from our Proverbs Gets Personal activity:

Careless words stab like a sword. But wise words bring healing.

— Proverbs 12:18 (ICB)

The bottom line of Generous Words is that we can use our words to heal, or we can use our words to hurt. If our words fall in the middle of those two areas, it might be worth reflecting on the purpose of your speech. Ask yourself, *If it's not helpful, what's the point in saying it?* We've all been on the giving and receiving sides of both types of remarks.

Now, we will take a few moments to sit, be still, and reflect on this Bible verse. See what God wants to tell you. What wisdom do you need? Ask Him. Just like He gave Solomon wisdom, He'll also provide wisdom for you. Do your words hurt, or do they heal?



Play a worship song and open with prayer. After students quietly reflect and listen for God's voice, close with prayer. Encourage students to boldly seek wisdom from a trusted adult if careless words are causing stress in their lives or if they need support with making a change.



Teacher note: Adjust this reflection time accordingly depending on your students' specific themes or issues. If you know of particular topics or phrases that students are experiencing when it comes to careless words, put them out there and acknowledge the real impact they're having on the students. The students will feel seen and understood when you name these factors and call them out.



LESSON 3: JOIN UP DEEPER LEARNING IN COMMUNITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Fill in the blanks by using Generous Words toward yourself.

"I am worthy of love, happiness, and success because _____."

"I am valuable because _____."

"I believe in myself because _____."

GOSSIP IS NOT GENEROUS WORDS

Did you know that we speak around 16,000 words per day?

Ideally, our words speak life and truth to those around us. But sometimes, our words have a negative impact, such as in gossip, rumors, bullying, cyberbullying, and making careless remarks. How many times have you been in a conversation that you thought was innocent, but then you heard one of these statements:

- "Guess what I heard about [so-and-so]...?"
- "Promise you won't tell anyone...?"
- "Keep this between us..."
- "Can you keep a secret? Well, ..."
- "Don't tell anyone I told you this, but..."

Typically, these phrases are followed by someone telling a story that isn't theirs to share. Rumors spread like wildfires. Secrets are whispered without hesitation. Friendships end, and feelings get hurt.

As we've already touched on, it's normal for you — as a middle schooler — to experience drama, gossip, and rumors. It can be easy to fall into these traps without knowing it.

Let's say you hear something in class, and after the bell rings, you repeat it to someone else. All you thought you were doing was passing along information you just heard. It seems harmless, right?

But did you stop to think about whether the information was true? How would sharing that information impact the person you are talking about? Sometimes, it's hard to think about the long-term effects that your words might have on someone else. And don't worry: You'll continue to grow in this area way past middle school and throughout adulthood.

You may create a tense situation by not using Generous Words about others. When you take away the opportunity for someone to defend themselves or to set the story straight.

And just because phrases like “Don’t tell anyone I told you, but...” are used, a conversation *often will* get back to the person you are talking about. It usually does. And then the words you repeated will hurt them mentally and emotionally.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Do you know the saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words”? It means that pictures can tell stories all on their own, letting us imagine what’s going on without even saying a word. Today, we will look at a picture together to see if we can figure out what’s happening and what the people in the photo might be saying.



Display the picture located in the slide deck. Ask your students the following questions:

- › What’s happening?
- › What words do you think are being said?
- › What stands out about this photo?
- › How do you think the people involved are feeling?
- › What scenario in your life does this remind you of?

Now consider these questions as well:

- › What if the boy pushing his peer chose to use his words instead of actions?
- › What if the girl stood up for her peer instead of recording him being shoved?
- › How could this situation be different for everyone?

Let’s choose one of the people in the image and reframe the situation using Generous Words. This exercise will not only help us understand the power of our words but also motivate us to use them in a positive way.



Divide students into groups of 2-3 and assign them one of the images in the Teacher Portal. The images are also located in the slide deck. Provide each group with five sticky notes.

Today, with your group, you will observe an image of situations you might see here at school. Using your sticky notes, jot down your responses to the following questions:

- › What’s happening?
- › What words do you think are being said?
- › What stands out about this photo?
- › How do you think the people involved are feeling?
- › What scenario in your life does this remind you of?

Just like we did with the example, choose one of the people in your image and come up with a generous response to defuse or reframe the situation using Generous Words.

WRAP UP



Complete this lesson by displaying each photo on the screen. Have each group pick two sticky notes to expand on and present to the class.



LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

STEPPING INTO CHANGE & GENEROSITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

We know that challenging times happen based on what we discussed and the images we saw in the last lesson. In middle school and throughout life, we'll all experience pain and sadness now and then. **What are some Generous Words you can use toward someone you know is having a hard time right now?**

REFLECT & RESPOND



Begin this lesson by playing the beginning of the *Generous Words* film (located on the slide deck). Pause at 1:06.

Display the next slide so students can read the words that were said to Damien. (*loser, clumsy, Why is he on the team?*)

ASK STUDENTS

- › **How did the negative words said about Damien impact him?**
- › **What did you observe that allowed you to notice Damien struggling with the words that were said about him?**

Damien began to describe himself by the words spoken or written about him. Consider this question for a moment: Who gave them the right to say mean things about Damien and make him feel bad about himself? That answer is ... **NOBODY!** And that goes for you, too. There is so much power when you believe you are who God says you are and not what others might think or say about you.



Play the remainder of the film. If time allows, replay the whole film.

ASK STUDENTS

- › **How was Damien different after his friend chose to help and strengthen his skills on the field?**
- › **Do you think this friend's positive impact replaced the hurt caused by the unkind words Damien had heard?**

Even though Damien experienced some good things in his life, they didn't instantly make the feeling of rejection disappear. Remember when we talked about how our words can have a lasting impact? Well, that's true.

But there's a way to mend these situations, just like you saw in the video. When Damien's teammate realized the hurt he had caused, he acknowledged it and apologized. Those two little words, "I'm

sorry," can help you face your mistakes and start moving forward by repairing the relationship. Being genuinely sorry and saying that to another person can make it easier for the other person to forgive you.

It is never too late to apologize, whether something happened recently or years ago, like in elementary school.

SPEAK WORDS OF HEALING



Is there a relationship at school or in your family that you need to repair because of the words you chose to use? If so, using your paper, write an apology note to that person. Take responsibility for your actions, ask for forgiveness, and don't forget to make it sincere and use Generous Words.



Allow time for students to write their notes. Play calming music in the background, and if possible, provide space for students to write their notes confidentially.

WRAP-UP

Whether you deliver an apology note immediately or keep it until you feel like it's the right time, writing it allows you to confront your wrongdoing and actively work on using words to impact someone positively rather than negatively. Remember, repairing a relationship takes time. Also, acknowledge that you are human and it's okay not to be perfect. Proverbs 14:9 (NIV) says:

Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.

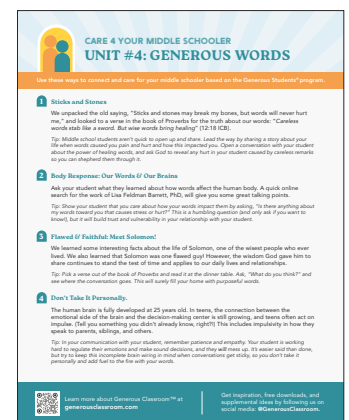
So today and every day, let's choose our words wisely, avoid gossip and rumors, and use Generous Words to bring healing and happiness to those around us.



Show the My Generous Life Rewind and So ... What Now? slides (located on the slide deck).



Send home the *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* parent newsletter for UNIT #4: GENEROUS WORDS. This can be accessed in the Teacher Portal.



Proverbs Gets Personal!

Just like Solomon, our lives and the choices we make are sometimes flawed. We are not perfect and won't be until heaven, but God, in His faithfulness, will always provide direction and love. When it comes to the words we say, God's faithfulness and God's Word are the best bet for learning how to become people who speak Generous Words.

The following five proverbs, or words of wisdom, are taken from just one of the 31 chapters of the book of Proverbs, and they all address the topic of Generous Words. With a partner, choose the proverb that stands out to you and fill out the chart to identify what Solomon and the proverb are saying. Then, after reading Solomon's "content," decide if you believe it's worth tapping that "follow" button for the book of Proverbs from God's Word. Lastly, write a creative caption to share the wisdom with your friends.

The words of the wicked kill; the speech of the upright saves.

– Proverbs 12:6 (MSG)

The gossip of bad people gets them in trouble; the conversation of good people keeps them out of it.

– Proverbs 12:13 (MSG)

Fools have short fuses and explode all too quickly; the prudent quietly shrug off insults.

– Proverbs 12:16 (MSG)

Truth lasts; lies are here today, gone tomorrow.

– Proverbs 12:19 (MSG)

Careless words stab like a sword. But wise words bring healing.

– Proverbs 12:18 (ICB)

1. Circle your favorite proverb.
2. Rewrite it in your own words: _____

3. Bottom line (main takeaway): _____

4. Where/when in my life this wisdom would help me: _____

5. Based on what this proverb says, do you believe the wisdom from the book of Proverbs is worth following? Fill in your selection.

 Follow

 Don't Follow



Gratitude Journal

Write or sketch three specific things you're thankful for today.



Proverbs Gets Personal!





Proverbs Gets Personal!







CARE 4 YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER

UNIT #4: GENEROUS WORDS

Use these ways to connect and care for your middle schooler based on the Generous Students® program.

1 Sticks and Stones

We unpacked the old saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” and looked to a verse in the book of Proverbs for the truth about our words: “Careless words stab like a sword. But wise words bring healing” (12:18 ICB).

Tip: Middle school students aren’t quick to open up and share. Lead the way by sharing a story about your life when words caused you pain and hurt and how this impacted you. Open a conversation with your student about the power of healing words, and ask God to reveal any hurt in your student caused by careless remarks so you can shepherd them through it.

2 Body Response: Our Words & Our Brains

Ask your student what they learned about how words affect the human body. A quick online search for the work of Lisa Feldman Barrett, PhD, will give you some great talking points.

Tip: Show your student that you care about how your words impact them by asking, “Is there anything about my words toward you that causes stress or hurt?” This is a humbling question (and only ask if you want to know!), but it will build trust and vulnerability in your relationship with your student.

3 Flawed & Faithful: Meet Solomon!

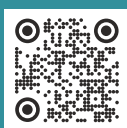
We learned some interesting facts about the life of Solomon, one of the wisest people who ever lived. We also learned that Solomon was one flawed guy! However, the wisdom God gave him to share continues to stand the test of time and applies to our daily lives and relationships.

Tip: Pick a verse out of the book of Proverbs and read it at the dinner table. Ask, “What do you think?” and see where the conversation goes. This will surely fill your home with purposeful words.

4 Don’t Take It Personally.

The human brain is fully developed at 25 years old. In teens, the connection between the emotional side of the brain and the decision-making center is still growing, and teens often act on impulse. (Tell you something you didn’t already know, right?!) This includes impulsivity in how they speak to parents, siblings, and others.

Tip: In your communication with your student, remember patience and empathy. Your student is working hard to regulate their emotions and make sound decisions, and they will mess up. It’s easier said than done, but try to keep this incomplete brain wiring in mind when conversations get sticky, so you don’t take it personally and add fuel to the fire with your words.



Learn more about Generous Classroom™ at
generousclassroom.com

Get inspiration, free downloads, and supplemental ideas by following us on social media: @GenerousClassroom.



UNIT #4

GENEROUS WORDS

Lesson Extension

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

Impact of Words.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

6TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

7TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

8TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.



UNIT #4

GENEROUS WORDS

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL RESOURCES

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, and Self-Management.

DAILY EMOTIONS CHECK-IN

Incorporate an emotional check-in with your students before each lesson or when needed. Emotional check-ins assist children with understanding their feelings and the feelings of others. Have students identify their emotions by pointing to a picture and explaining how they feel. Download and print our Zones of Regulation/Emotions Check-In that is in the Teacher Portal.

MINDFUL MINUTE

Let's take a mindful minute to focus on positive affirmations and the power of "yet." Close your eyes and take a deep breath in, and slowly exhale. Let your mind settle into this moment.

Now, think of something you're working on, a challenge or a goal that feels tough right now. Instead of saying, "I can't do it," add the word "yet." Say to yourself, "I can't do it yet."

Remember Philippians 4:13, which says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This verse reminds us that with God's help, what feels impossible now is something we can achieve in time.

As you breathe, affirm to yourself: "I am growing," "I am learning," "I am capable," and "God is with me." Let these words fill you with hope and determination, knowing that every step you take, no matter how small, is part of the journey.

When you're ready, open your eyes, holding on to the power of "yet" and the strength that comes from your faith.

ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

GENEROUS THOUGHTS CHALK ACTIVITY

Provide students time to brainstorm words of encouragement. During recess or a brain break, allow students to write and illustrate their words of encouragement on the sidewalk. If it's a cold day out, allow them to use a whiteboard or the class chalkboard.



UNIT #5

GENEROUS MONEY

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do I establish a healthy mindset with money to build a generous life?

LEARNING TARGET

I can choose to worship God over money.

GENEROUS MONEY DEFINITION

Use my money, no matter how much, if there is a life I can touch.

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

- Discernment.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Build a habit of gratitude through different practices.
- Analyze images and messages related to money.
- Complete the Money Mindset assessment and analyze the results.
- Watch an engaging video and discuss the personal connections in it.
- Read Matthew 6:24. Identify ways they adore God and money, ultimately discovering you cannot serve two masters.
- Gather evidence and use critical thinking skills to defend their given money perspectives.
- Reflect on their personal money mindset.
- Engage in prayer to invite God in for guidance.

LESSON PREP

Access the following UNIT #5 materials:

- Generous Money slide deck.
- Student handouts.
- *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler: 4 Tips To Connect With Your Generous Student* parent newsletter.



UNIT AT A GLANCE

LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

Watch an engaging video. Define Generous Money and complete the Money Mindset assessment.

LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

Read Matthew 6:24. Students will identify ways they adore God and money, ultimately discovering they cannot serve two masters.

LESSON 3: JOIN UP

Gather evidence to define their given money perspective in the Great Money Debate activity.

LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

Watch *I Like Car*. Reflect on Catherine's perspective of money and how she chose to give.

UPON COMPLETION

Send *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* home.





UNIT #5

GENEROUS MONEY



LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

INTRODUCTION & START WITH GRATITUDE



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think of a time you received or earned money. What part(s) of that experience are you grateful for?

INTRODUCTION



Begin this lesson by showing the slide and allowing students a few minutes to look at the different images. Then, ask students the following questions:

- › What message do these images convey?
- › What comes to mind when you see these images?
- › What phrase would you use to summarize everything you see on the screen?

You just saw flashy sports cars, stacks of cash, an insane amount of shoes, the latest and greatest trendy items, song lyrics, and maybe even a few familiar faces, right? The message of how the world wants us to view and spend money is all around you, and most of the time, you are unaware of it — that's called subliminal messaging. Whether it's the billboards you see during car rides, ads on your smartphones, movies, or catchy songs on the radio, the world constantly tells you that the goal in life is to have a lot of money and spend it all on material items. The world says that the amount of money we have determines our happiness, and whether or not we are successful depends on how many zeros we have in our bank account balance.

But here's the thing: Money doesn't buy relationships, friendships, talents, or love. Having more "things" doesn't bring happiness. And if you are honest with yourself, you probably already know that getting caught up in the "wanting more" attitude, celebrity lifestyles, and flashy things can make you greedier and even cause anxiety and worry. There is a tricky balance here, because money is essential and allows you to buy food, clothes, housing, and even things that make life a little more enjoyable (like sweet kicks and concert tickets). Finding balance is easy when you have a healthy money mindset. As a middle schooler, chances are you probably haven't thought much about your money mindset. Let's take a short quiz to determine where your mindset is.



Pass out the Money Mindset Meter worksheet to students and give them time to take the self-assessment, analyze their results, and follow up with a class discussion.

ASK STUDENTS

- › Which categories of the Money Mindset Meter did you fall under?
- › Were you surprised by which type of money mindset categories you identified?
- › What do you think a healthy money mindset means?



Show the Healthy Money Mindset slide.

This activity was just for fun! If you fall into a category that you disagree with, no worries. While you may have been identified as a dreamer, comparer, helper, planner, or neutral on the Money Mindset Meter, it's important to remember that your mindset will shift over time as you grow and learn more about money, yourself, and the world around you.

Regardless of where you landed in this activity, it's important to remember that even though money is tangible and we can hold it in our hands, money belongs to God. The Bible has over 2,000 references to money alone. Let's look at one of the verses together.

You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.

— Matthew 6:24 (MSG)

The message is simple: You cannot serve both God and money. It may appear that you do not have enough money to worry about, but that doesn't mean thinking about money isn't important. Now is the time to start planning for your future, learning to have a healthy money mindset, and being generous. When you are generous with your money, you use your money, no matter how much, if there is a life you can touch. You choose to worship God, not money.

SPOTLIGHT STORY



Show the *Taking Over Starbucks With Drew* video (located on the slide deck).

Drew decided to do something nice by paying for other people's coffee at Starbucks. This generous act shows how easy it is to make someone's day a little better through Generosity, proving that being generous with money doesn't require much.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- › How can you relate to today's Spotlight Story?
- › How can one balance being generous with money while managing financial responsibilities?
- › Are there limits to how generous one should be with their money?

DID YOU KNOW?

- The color green was selected for money during the Civil War because the ink didn't fade, protecting it against counterfeiting.⁸
- Each dollar has a lifespan, and a coin can last around 30 years.⁹
- Children as young as five already have a distinct emotional reaction to spending and saving money.
- 90% of children ages 8-19 give to charity.¹⁰
- Americans gave almost \$500 billion in 2022.

ASK STUDENTS

- › Is there a time you can think of when someone you know has been generous with their money? (It can even be your parents.)
- › Have you ever had the opportunity to share or bless others with money?

YOUR TURN

We've learned a lot about being generous with money so far. It's now time for you to use what you've learned. Here are a few ways to get started:

- Look under your bed, in your coat pockets, and around your room. Do you have money that you can use to be generous and touch someone's life around you?
- Take notice of the ads, songs, and images you see about money. Write down phrases or save images to bring into the classroom to show your classmates and teacher.
- When you feel like you are slipping into a negative money mindset, read Matthew 6:24 and remind yourself that nobody can worship both God and money. Remind yourself to put God first always.



LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION



START WITH GRATITUDE!

When have you opened your eyes in wonder because what you saw was extraordinary?

THAT WAS THEN

What does the Bible, written over 2,000 years ago, tell us about money?



Show the slide with the photos of the musty cellar and sunshine.

ASK STUDENTS

› Where would you rather be, in a musty cellar or the sunshine?

Discuss with your neighbor what you might experience in these unique places using your five senses. What do you see? Hear? Smell? Touch? Taste?

When we look at these images, it seems silly to think anyone would choose to be in the musty, dirty cellar when the sun is shining bright. Even if you don't love being outside, it's hard to imagine wanting to hang out in the darkness with the windows closed and shades down when the sky is blue outside.

What makes this even more powerful is that these images are a biblical picture of how we choose to view the significance of money in our lives.

You may have heard of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, one of the most famous speeches in history. Jesus spoke about some major topics: prayer, forgiveness, worry, fasting, and wealth, just to name a few. He gave clear directions about how to live. Everything He taught relates to modern life today.

Take a look at what Jesus says about the issue of money:

Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a musty cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!

You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.

— Matthew 6:22-24 (MSG)

ASK STUDENTS

- › Why do you think Jesus uses the idea of light and darkness to teach us about money?
- › Where does Generosity fit into this picture?

As the verse said, you can't worship God and money both. To fully understand this statement, let's dig deeper into the meaning of worship:



Show the definitions of worship (located on the slide deck).

WORSHIP

Verb: to regard with great or extravagant respect, honor, or devotion; to honor or show reverence for a divine being or supernatural power

Noun: extravagant respect or admiration for or devotion to an object of esteem; reverence offered by a divine being or supernatural power ¹¹

Some translations say it this way:

You cannot serve both God and money. (NIV)

No one can be a slave to two masters. He will hate one master and love the other. Or he will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. (ICB)

YOUR TURN

Nobody wants a dark life. Squinty-eyed greed and distrust will only make it darker. But how do you open the blinds and allow light to shine in if some areas of your heart need to be illuminated with God's Generosity? One of the first steps is to reflect and consider how you view God and money. Like all other Ways to Live Generously, Touching Lives with Generous Money begins with Generous Thoughts. Take some time to fill out God, Money & Me — think honestly and openly about your view and lifestyle regarding God and money. This is the first step to opening those blinds!



Pass out God, Money & Me. This reflection activity can be done individually, as a small group discussion, or as a whole group discussion. Choose the approach that will simultaneously allow students to be the most comfortable and vulnerable.



LESSON 3: JOIN UP

DEEPER LEARNING IN COMMUNITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think about the past week. Where have you or your family chosen to be generous with your money? How did that experience make you grateful?



Given the engagement, this lesson may require extended time. Plan to provide extra time for this lesson or modify it to fit your schedule.



For this activity, students will use their critical thinking skills to debate whether money is good or evil. They will be asked to provide evidence to defend their answers. Each group will get to participate in the front of the room. If time is restricted, you can split the class in half and have just one debate.

To begin:

- Display the slide that explains the steps of the debate.
- Divide students into groups of 2-3 and give each group the Debate Planner (located in the Teacher Portal).
- Assign each group the topic of whether money is good or evil.
- Provide resources: a Bible and a computer for articles and information.
- Display the slide, "Is money good or evil?"
- Provide time for students to gather evidence to support their perspectives.

THE GREAT MONEY DEBATE

Today, it's time for a debate! Our topic: Is money good or evil? Some people believe money can be good, while others believe money is the root of evil. Regardless of which statement you agree with, you have been assigned the topic of good or evil and must find evidence to support that perspective. Using the Bible, online resources (articles, current events, studies), and your own experience, you will gather three pieces of evidence to support your stance. Then, you will stand in the front of the room and debate with your classmates whether money is good or evil.



After the debate, provide time for a class discussion on the evidence of whether money is good or evil. Here are some topics to help start that conversation:

- › **Did you hear something today that you had never thought of before about money being good or evil?**
- › **How many of you wished you were on the other side of the debate?**
- › **What is your bottom-line takeaway about money being good or evil?**

WRAP UP

What a debate! Today, we learned that money is neither good nor evil — it's what you *do* with it that matters the most. When you choose to use your money, no matter how much, if there is a life you can touch, you are being generous with it, learning to serve God first, and putting what matters at the top. As we wrap up this lesson, let's take another look at Matthew 6:24.

You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.

— Matthew 6:24 (MSG)

Two important words help make this message very clear: **worship** and **serve**. This verse reminds us to choose what we worship and serve carefully, because this choice affects our lives.



LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

STEPPING INTO CHANGE & GENEROSITY



Teacher Note: This lesson may need extended time.



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Recall a time when someone was generous with their money toward you. What made you grateful about that experience?

REFLECT & RESPOND

So far, we have discussed the importance of having a healthy money mindset, and that you can worship God or money but not both.

Take a moment and reflect on your money mindset over the last few days. Have you thought more about possessions or the amount of money you want to have? Or has your mindset shifted to thinking more about how you can bless others by being generous with your money? Let's retake the Money Mindset Meter assessment and see what category you are in now that you've learned a lot about being generous with money.



Set time aside to retake the Money Mindset Meter assessment and analyze the results.

I LIKE CAR.

ASK STUDENTS

- › Imagine you have \$5,000; what would you do with the money?
- › How would you feel if you were saving that money to purchase a car and then felt a nudge from God to give it away?
- › How can having a healthy money mindset help you to be generous in situations where you can bless others?



Play the film *I Like Car.*, located in the slide deck, and pause when Catherine questions if she did the right thing. (1:30)

ASK STUDENTS

- › Why do you think Catherine faced difficulties in her mindset after donating her money to the widow?
- › Do you think Catherine has a healthy money mindset? How do you know?
- › Considering Catherine's situation, predict what will happen next in her story.



Play the rest of the film.

We have already decided that money is neither good nor evil, but what you do with it truly matters. What would have happened if Catherine had ignored God's nudge and continued saving her money? Catherine was an amazing lady who showed up for work daily, put God first, prayed for others, and needed a new car. She continued to live out The 7 Ways of Living Generously. But because she had a healthy money mindset and knew that her money was God's, she answered the call and united a community in many ways.

ASK STUDENTS (Replay the video if need be.)

- › **Being generous with our money isn't an isolated action. Where did you see examples of Generous Thoughts, Generous Words, and Generous Time throughout Catherine's video?**

WRAP UP

In the video, Catherine says,

"I cannot give what I don't have, so I just gave what I had."

You may not have \$5,000 to give away, but chances are you have a little bit of money from your birthday, a holiday, or money you've earned that you can use to bless others. Having a healthy money mindset won't always be easy, but inviting God to help us opens up new ways to be generous and help others with what we have — and that can make a huge difference in our lives.



Take a few minutes to read the prayers below, circle the one you feel most called to, and continue praying this prayer over the next week. Notice how God works in your heart and your life.

MY PRAYERS

- Dear God, thinking about my money mindset is something I've never considered before. Please help me understand that what I have is from You, and as I grow, give me the wisdom to create a healthy money mindset. Amen.
- Dear God, I am struggling to view money as Your gift. It's easy for me to follow the patterns of this world and want to spend everything on myself in ways that may not be honoring to You! Help change my heart and mindset, so I don't get trapped in the cycle of always wanting more. Amen.
- Dear God, I believe my mindset toward money is healthy; it's easy to see it's Your gift. However, I struggle to see opportunities to give money because I often think about what I want. Help me see others the way You do, and open my eyes to opportunities for Generosity. Amen.
- Dear God, I am grateful for the things You've given me. I recognize that all I have is Yours, and I want to use my money how YOU want me to. Help me to continue to discern Your will throughout my entire life. Amen.

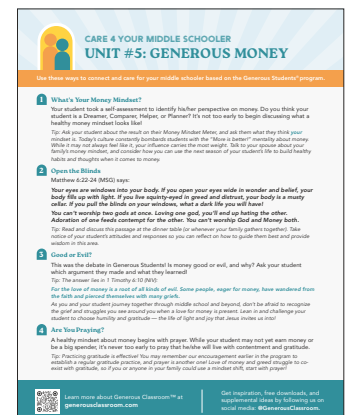
Would your prayer be different or combine some of the prayers above? Feel free to write your prayer below that is 100% applicable to your life right now!



Show the My Generous Life Rewind and So ... What Now? slides (located on the slide deck).



Send home the *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* parent newsletter for UNIT #5: GENEROUS MONEY. This can be accessed in the Teacher Portal.





Gratitude Journal

Write or sketch three specific things you're thankful for today.



My Prayers

Take a few minutes to read the prayers below, circle the one you feel most called to, and continue praying this prayer over the next week. Notice how God works in your heart and your life.

Dear God, thinking about my money mindset is something I've never considered before. Please help me understand that what I have is from You, and as I grow, give me the wisdom to create a healthy money mindset. Amen.

Dear God, I believe my mindset toward money is healthy; it's easy to see it's Your gift. However, I struggle to see opportunities to give money because I often think about what I want. Help me see others the way You do, and open my eyes to opportunities for generosity. Amen.

Dear God, I am struggling to view money as Your gift. It's easy for me to follow the patterns of this world and want to spend everything on myself in ways that may not be honoring to You! Help change my heart and mindset, so I don't get trapped in the cycle of always wanting more. Amen.

Dear God, I am grateful for the things You've given me. I recognize that all I have is Yours, and I want to use my money how YOU want me to. Help me to continue to discern Your will throughout my entire life. Amen.

Would your prayer be different or combine some of the prayers above? Feel free to write your prayer below that is 100% applicable to your life right now!



Debate Planner



Is money good or evil? Circle your stance.

Money is good.

Money is evil.



THREE SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1

2

3



OPENING STATEMENT NOTES

CROSS EXAMINATION NOTES

REBUTTAL ROUND

CLOSING STATEMENT



God, Money & Me



Thoughts I have about God

Thoughts I have about money

Benefit from God in my life

Benefit from money in my life



If I had to choose one, I honestly
give more attention to:

God

Money

(circle one)



Benefit from God in my life

Benefit from money in my life

I choose to worship:

God

Money

(circle one)

"If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a musty cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have! You can't worship two gods at once."

Matthew 6:22-24 (MSG)

Illustrate or sketch what your heart hears from Matthew 6:22-24.

Money Mindset Meter

Read the statements below and then decide how much you agree or disagree with each one. Then, look at the Money Mindset Meter and color in the pointer arrow for the category you are in.

1. If I had more money, I could solve all my problems.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

2. I compare my possessions and the amount of money my family has to others around me.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

3. My perception of money has changed based on what the world has told me about money.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

4. I have given to the church or a charity with my own money.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

5. If something new comes along, I am tempted to get it immediately.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

6. I feel pressured to spend money on things because my friends have them or I see them on social media.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

7. I often think about ways to earn and spend money.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

8. I enjoy sharing my money or belongings with others, even if it means having less for myself.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

9. I find it difficult to save my money for future items.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

10. I have thought about which career I want based on how much I earn.



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

DREAMER

Agrees with statements 1, 7, 9, and 10

Thinks having more money will solve problems and dreams about items they would buy

COMPARER

Agrees with statements 2, 3, 5, and 6

Always comparing what they have to others, especially feeling pressured to keep up

HELPER

Agrees with statement 8

Enjoys sharing what they have with others, even if it means having less for themselves

PLANNER

Agrees with statement 9 and may agree with 10

Thinks a lot about ways to earn and spend money and may have ideas on their future based on earnings

NEUTRAL

Is neutral on more than two statements

Shows a mix of responses across statements. Neither agrees nor disagrees on most statements



CARE 4 YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER

UNIT #5: GENEROUS MONEY

Use these ways to connect and care for your middle schooler based on the Generous Students® program.

1 What's Your Money Mindset?

Your student took a self-assessment to identify his/her perspective on money. Do you think your student is a Dreamer, Comparer, Helper, or Planner? It's not too early to begin discussing what a healthy money mindset looks like!

*Tip: Ask your student about the result on their Money Mindset Meter, and ask them what they think **your** mindset is. Today's culture constantly bombards students with the "More is better!" mentality about money. While it may not always feel like it, your influence carries the most weight. Talk to your spouse about your family's money mindset, and consider how you can use the next season of your student's life to build healthy habits and thoughts when it comes to money.*

2 Open the Blinds

Matthew 6:22-24 (MSG) says:

Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a musty cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!

You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.

Tip: Read and discuss this passage at the dinner table (or whenever your family gathers together). Take notice of your student's attitudes and responses so you can reflect on how to guide them best and provide wisdom in this area.

3 Good or Evil?

This was the debate in Generous Students! Is money good or evil, and why? Ask your student which argument they made and what they learned!

Tip: The answer lies in 1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV):

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

As you and your student journey together through middle school and beyond, don't be afraid to recognize the grief and struggles you see around you when a love for money is present. Lean in and challenge your student to choose humility and gratitude — the life of light and joy that Jesus invites us into!

4 Are You Praying?

A healthy mindset about money begins with prayer. While your student may not yet earn money or be a big spender, it's never too early to pray that he/she will live with contentment and gratitude.

Tip: Practicing gratitude is effective! You may remember our encouragement earlier in the program to establish a regular gratitude practice, and prayer is another one! Love of money and greed struggle to co-exist with gratitude, so if you or anyone in your family could use a mindset shift, start with prayer!



Learn more about Generous Classroom™ at
generousclassroom.com

Get inspiration, free downloads, and supplemental ideas by following us on social media: @GenerousClassroom.



UNIT #5

GENEROUS MONEY

Lesson Extension

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

Discernment.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

6TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

7TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

8TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.



UNIT #5

GENEROUS MONEY

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL RESOURCES

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, and Self-Management.

DAILY EMOTIONS CHECK-IN

Incorporate an emotional check-in with your students before each lesson or when needed. Emotional check-ins assist children with understanding their feelings and the feelings of others. Have students identify their emotions by pointing to a picture and explaining how they feel. Download and print our Zones of Regulation/Emotions Check-In that is in the Teacher Portal.

MINDFUL MINUTE

Take a deep breath in, and slowly let it out. Close your eyes if you're comfortable, and let's focus our thoughts for a moment.

We live in a world where money can seem like the most important thing. It's easy to think that having more money will solve our problems or make us happier. But let's take a moment to remember what the Bible says about money and contentment.

Let's think about this for a moment: Instead of worrying about how much money we have, we can trust that God will provide what's best for us. We can also remember that true happiness doesn't come from money, but from our relationship with God and how we share what we have with others.

Let's close with a quick prayer:

"Dear God, thank You for providing for our needs. Help us to trust in You and find contentment in what You have given us. Teach us to use what we have wisely and to be generous with others. Amen."

ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY



UNIT #6

GENEROUS TIME

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I use my time generously to connect with others?

LEARNING TARGET

I can intentionally be generous with my time toward God and others to experience meaningful and fulfilling relationships.

GENEROUS TIME DEFINITION

Use any moment in my day to put Generosity on display.

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

- Connection.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Build a habit of gratitude through different practices.
- Watch an engaging video and discuss the personal connections in it.
- Define Generous Time and analyze how personal time is spent throughout the day using a time inventory sheet.
- Read John 3:1-4.
- Examine the time spent between Jesus and Nicodemus. Discuss the importance of building connections. Identify various passages in the Bible where people were generous with their time.
- Use the H.E.L.P. strategy to learn how to connect with others and apply this practice in an activity with classmates.
- Illustrate a comic strip that displays Generous Time.

LESSON PREP

Access the following UNIT #6 materials:

- Generous Time slide deck.
- Student handouts.
- *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler: 4 Tips To Connect With Your Generous Student* parent newsletter.



UNIT AT A GLANCE

LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

Watch an engaging video. Define Generous Time and analyze how personal time is spent in the activity, *How Do I Spend My Time?*

LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

Read John 3:1-4. Identify various passages in the Bible where people were generous with their time.

LESSON 3: JOIN UP

Use the H.E.L.P. strategy to learn how to connect with others. Discuss the importance of eight minutes.

LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

Illustrate a comic strip that displays the importance of connection and being generous with time.

UPON COMPLETION

Send *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* home.





UNIT #6

GENEROUS TIME



LESSON 1: SPOTLIGHT STORY

INTRODUCTION & START WITH GRATITUDE



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think about three things you are grateful for today. Don't worry about how big or small they may be.

INTRODUCTION

Imagine being handed \$86,400 and told the majority of that money is yours to spend. That's a lot of money, right? You might already be considering buying a new phone, some sweet kicks, or the hottest video game. But what if I told you that this number represents something much more valuable than money? It's your time.

You see, every day, each of us is given 86,400 seconds to spend. Unlike money, you cannot save it for later or borrow more when it runs out. So, how you choose to use your time becomes an important decision, even for a middle schooler.

ASK STUDENTS

- › Do you think time is more valuable than money? Why or why not?

HOW DO I SPEND MY TIME?

Let's just say you spend 8 hours sleeping and around 6 hours at school. That leaves 10 hours, or about 36,000 seconds, to decide how to manage how much time you will spend on activities.

In our busy world, 10 hours of "free" time gets lost quickly. Have you ever found yourself at the end of the day wondering, *What did I even do today?* Most of you probably have, because we all have. Today, you will complete a time inventory and discover how much time you spend on specific activities throughout the day.



Pass out the How Do I Spend My Time? sheet and set a timer for 5-7 minutes. Allow students to complete their time inventory. When time is up, have a class discussion about where students spent the most and least amount of time. Collect student worksheets and save them for the Reflect & Respond lesson.



Consider connecting this to your math standards for graphing. Collect worksheets for a future activity.

Take a glance at your worksheet and think about these questions:

- › Where did you spend most of your time (minus school and sleeping)?
- › Where did you spend the least amount of time?
- › Did you find yourself primarily alone or hanging out with friends and family?
- › How much time did you spend intentionally with God?

Greg McKeown, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Essentialism*, says this:

*"We overvalue nonessentials like a nicer car or house, or even intangibles like the number of our followers on [social media]. As a result, we neglect activities that are truly essential, like spending time with our loved ones, nurturing our spirit, or taking care of our health."*¹²

As you look through your sheet, you may find that you are spending too much time alone, not enough time connecting with God and others. Finding balance in how you manage your time is critical. Screen time can be fantastic; time alone can help you recharge and refresh. But when either of those things starts to dominate our lives, we forget that spending time with God and others is an excellent way to be generous and to please God. Psalm 133:1 says this:

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

— Psalm 133:1 (NIV)

SPOTLIGHT STORY



Show the *I Like Bike.* film (located on the slide deck).



DISCUSSION QUESTION

› How can you relate to today's Spotlight Story?

The family in *I Like Bike.* used their time to help others. Generous Time can be given in any measure — in moments, minutes, hours or days. It's about noticing something or someone who has a need and helping them.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In the years before 1992, when the first smartphone was announced and the first SMS (text) message sent, you had to intentionally set time aside to connect with friends through a phone that had a cord and was attached to the wall.¹³
- In recent years, teens spent nearly 70 percent less time hanging out with friends than in previous times.¹⁴
- From 2012 to 2018, loneliness rose steadily, partially due to the adoption of social media in 37 countries.¹⁴
- Spending time in meaningful social interactions may help boost cognitive and mental resilience, which, in simpler terms, means that your brain will get stronger if you connect with others.¹⁵



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Partner students up and ask them to discuss the following questions:

- › Why do teens spend less time hanging out with friends than in previous times?
- › Why do you think connecting with others makes your brain stronger?
- › How has your life changed with the adoption of social media? (positively or negatively)

YOUR TURN

We've learned a lot about being generous with time so far. It's now time for you to use what you've learned. Here are a few ways to get started:

- Challenge yourself to spend more time today connecting with friends, family, and peers in person rather than through technology.
- Consider how you can be more generous with your time this week toward God and others. Whether you intentionally set aside time to read the Bible or to connect with friends and family, how you use your time can positively impact you and the people you care about.
- If you are stuck or need help with time management, review your time management sheet and evaluate where you can adjust your schedule to connect with others. Ask a teacher or a parent to help you identify ways to use your time wisely.



LESSON 2: THEN & NOW

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think of a recent conversation that you've had with someone that left you feeling known and loved. **Based on that conversation, what are you grateful for?**

THAT WAS THEN: A NEED TO CONNECT

What does God's Word, written over 2,000 years ago, have to say about how we spend our time?

Today, we'll meet Nicodemus and discover how a single conversation can make a significant difference in someone's life.

Picture this: It was late at night, and Jesus probably felt exhausted after a long day of teaching and helping people. He was looking forward to some rest and sleep when, suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Back then, there weren't such things as doorbell cameras, so Jesus didn't know who was knocking late at night, yet He didn't hesitate to answer.

A Pharisee, Nicodemus, came to talk with Jesus. Nicodemus wasn't there to chat about the crazy water-to-wine miracle everyone was talking about ... he came to talk about *salvation*. One of the most famous Bible verses, John 3:16, comes from this conversation, in which Jesus took the time to connect with someone else. Let's take a look at the passage:

There was a man of the Pharisee sect, Nicodemus, a prominent leader among the Jews. Late one night he visited Jesus and said, "Rabbi, we all know you're a teacher straight from God. No one could do all the God-pointing, God-revealing acts you do if God weren't in on it."

Jesus said, "You're absolutely right. Take it from me: Unless a person is born from above, it's not possible to see what I'm pointing to—to God's kingdom."

"How can anyone," said Nicodemus, "be born who has already been born and grown up? You can't re-enter your mother's womb and be born again. What are you saying with this 'born-from-above' talk?"

— John 3:1-4 (MSG)

Jesus couldn't pop open an energy drink after a long day of teaching and saving, but thankfully, the Holy Spirit provided late-night energy for this profound and important conversation! Jesus answered Nicodemus' questions and responded to the doubts and unknowns Nicodemus was wrestling with. The Lord lovingly, generously spent time with this man, pointing him toward God's kingdom.

That was the first of three times we read about Nicodemus and Jesus in the New Testament.

Because of the powerful, late-night experience in which Jesus demonstrated such Generous Time, Nicodemus showed right back up for Jesus at two significant points:

- First, he questioned and stood up to the leaders who were wrongly accusing Jesus and looking for a reason to arrest him. (John 7:45-52)
- After Jesus died on the cross, Nicodemus came to help with His burial, using an expensive collection of spices. (John 19:38-42)

ASK STUDENTS

- › Do you think Nicodemus would have spoken up or wanted to honor Jesus if Jesus had chosen to go to bed rather than spend time with him that night? Why or why not?
- › What do Nicodemus' actions teach us about the importance of using our time generously to connect with others?

You don't show up to help bury the Son of God in a tomb unless you've been rocked by the powerful impact that connection had on your life. The time Jesus spent with Nicodemus changed him; the words Jesus spoke then changed every follower of Jesus.

THIS IS NOW: A NEED TO CONNECT

Look at the statement on the screen. With a partner, discuss whether you agree or disagree, and explain why.

People seek relationships and connections that bring meaning and purpose to their lives.

You may not have someone knocking on your door in the middle of the night to answer questions like we learned about with Jesus and Nicodemus, but chances are you've all been in situations where:

- You notice something that you can't ignore.
- You see someone in the hallway, cafeteria, or classroom that could use a friend.
- Someone texts you or stops you in the hall, asking, "Can you talk?" when you are busy.
- The look on someone's face tells you that something is wrong.

Maybe you've even paused, wondering if and how to respond in those situations.

Think about it: Jesus didn't hesitate to answer the door. That connection ended up changing a relationship. When you choose to use any moment in your day to put Generosity on display and are generous with your time, it could mean all the difference in the world. Whether it's with a friend, reaching out to someone who looks like they need to talk, or just sitting next to someone at lunch, it's important to understand the impact that just one connection could have on you and others.



Let your Bible teacher know you are covering the connection between Nicodemus and Jesus for this unit on Generous Time. A Bible lesson that provides more context about this interaction and the conversation about being born again will add extra impact!

YOUR TURN

The Bible has many accounts similar to this one between Jesus and Nicodemus, where we see people intentionally spending time with others, with meaningful and often eternal results.

Both then and now, we are designed by our Creator to experience meaningful and fulfilling relationships. Jesus intentionally spent time with the Father and others, and today, people intentionally spend time with God and others.



With a partner, choose one of the following passages (or find one on your own) and discover how it relates to intentional, Generous Time:

- Acts 2:42-47. (Believers living in community)
- John 4:1-30. (Woman at the well)
- Matthew 14:23. (Jesus spending time with the Father in prayer)
- John 11:12. (Jesus caring for his friend Lazarus)
- Luke 8:3. (Women who cared for Jesus)
- Mark 6:34. (Jesus giving time to teach)
- John 21:15-17. (Jesus and Peter talking after the Resurrection)
- Acts 10:34-43. (An incredible meeting between Peter and Cornelius)
- Ruth 1:16. (Ruth and Naomi have a meaningful friendship)



Instruct students to read their chosen passage and then discuss together the following questions:

- › How is Generous Time displayed in this passage?
- › What can this passage teach us about the importance of being generous with our time toward others?

WRAP UP

ASK STUDENTS

- › What would it look like for our community to think of Generous Time as a relay of purpose?



Show Christine Caine's quote (located on the slide deck).

"The Christian Life isn't a one-person race. It's a relay. You are not alone; you're part of a team assembled by our unstoppable God to achieve his eternal purposes."

— Christine Caine, *Unstoppable*

Reflect on this quote with a partner, discussing its meaning and how we are always part of the team when we connect with God and others and use our time generously.



LESSON 3: JOIN UP

DEEPER LEARNING IN COMMUNITY



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Think about someone in your life who has positively impacted you through their Generous Time and connection. **Why are you grateful for them?**

Most of the time, middle school can feel like a maze. For many, loneliness and fitting in are significant challenges. If you feel that way, you're not alone: everyone has felt like that at one point or another. But every day, in every class and in other activities, there are chances to connect with the people around you.

Think about this specific classroom. At the end of the year, you will have spent approximately 135 hours (8,100 minutes, or 486,000 seconds) with this group of classmates. And even more so if you have multiple classes together. Now, consider how many of these classmates you can honestly say you know and have a connection with. No worries if that number is small; today's activity will help!

LET'S MAKE A GREATER CONNECTION

When you find yourself in a situation where you might not know what to say or how to initiate a conversation, you can use the word HELP. We're not talking about saying, "I NEED HELP," but using the letters to help you remember what to say.



Display the H.E.L.P. strategy on the screen (located on the slide deck).

H stands for **Hobbies**

Ask: **"What are your hobbies or interests?"**

E is for **Entertainment**

Ask: **"What is your favorite movie, TV show, or book, or one that you recently thought was amazing?"**

LP is short for **Life Plans**

Ask: **"What are your plans this weekend?" or "Do you have any vacations planned that you are excited about?"**



Divide students into two equal circles, one inner and one outer, with circles facing each other. Ask students to introduce themselves, even if they know each other's names, and then tell one fun fact about themselves. Next, ask them to choose one part of the H.E.L.P. strategy (H, E, or LP) and initiate a conversation with the person they are facing. Allow the conversations to happen over one minute, then rotate the inner circle to the right, completing the same task with another student. This is an excellent time to remind students that if they end up with one of their closest friends, they can ask deeper questions like "How are you?" or "Is there any way that I can help you today?"



Before completing the activity as a whole group, choose two students who would be comfortable in the front of the room and ask them to demonstrate this activity.

Display the H.E.L.P. strategy on the board for students' use. Have students complete this eight times (eight minutes.)

WRAP UP

There may have been some hesitation in initiating a conversation with someone new. That's normal — it takes practice! But remember, it took one conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus to make a big difference. Today, you took eight minutes to learn something new about eight of your classmates. Did you know that setting the timer for eight minutes wasn't just random? Studies show that in our fast-paced world, where our attention is divided by alerts and notifications, you can impact someone's life by being generous with your time for eight minutes.



Play the *Do You Have 8 Minutes?* video (located on the slide deck).

Think for a moment: Are you an eight-minute friend? Do your friends know they can call you, busy or free to connect, and you'll be there? If not, take a moment to reach out and tell them you are there for them anytime, and mean it. You don't have to use the code "eight minutes." Create your own unique code! By sticking with this type of accountability, you will build a friendship to last a lifetime.



LESSON 4: REFLECT & RESPOND

STEPPING INTO CHANGE & GENEROSITY

Note: Due to the structure of this lesson, you may need to allow extra time for illustrations.



START WITH GRATITUDE!

Imagine you could spend the day with someone. **Who would you choose, and why would you be grateful to spend time with them?**

REFLECT & RESPOND



Begin this lesson by playing the video *I Like Being 98*. (located on the slide deck). See the portal for an extension lesson on this video.

In the video we just saw, you witnessed how one act of Generosity, someone being generous with their time and connecting with someone else, changed the course of life for both of them. This was true for Jesus and Nicodemus, and if you think for a few moments, it might be true for you, too.

Let's look at how a soccer coach being generous with their time turned into something bigger.



Show an example of a Connect Effect comic strip (located on the slide deck).

We all can come up with at least one person who has taken the time to connect with us — when one connection or conversation has led to something great. Think about these questions for a moment:

- › **When did someone connect with you by using their time?**
- › **How were they generous with their time toward you (conversation, sitting with you, helping you through, playing a game/sport with you, or mentoring you)?**
- › **How did that time affect you and others?**



Using the example and the comic strip template on your worksheet, illustrate when someone's connection (a friend, teacher, coach, youth group leader, bus driver, cafeteria worker, etc.) made a

difference for you. Or illustrate how you want to be a difference-maker with your time for someone else. Don't worry if you can't fill out the last box. Often, we may never know how being generous with our time made a difference in someone's life. Use that box to infer what you think or hope might happen.



If students have access to a personal computer, [Storyboard That](#) is a way to make their projects digital. Note: The free version of this program allows students to create a three-box comic strip.

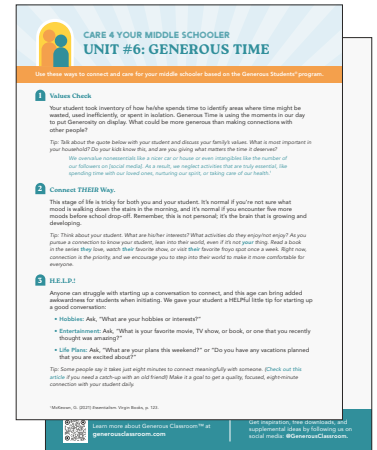
Provide time for students to share/display their comic strips.



Show the My Generous Life Rewind and So ... What Now? slides (located on the slide deck).



Send home the *Care 4 Your Middle Schooler* parent newsletter for UNIT #6: GENEROUS TIME. This can be accessed in the Teacher Portal.





Gratitude Journal

Write or sketch three specific things you're thankful for today.



How Do I Spend My Time?

**Think about the last 24 hours.
How did you spend your time?**

Using the table, record your activities in hour increments:

- Sleeping/Resting
- Extracurricular activities
- Friends/Family
- Technology/Media
- Time With God
- Community Service/Volunteering

Take a glance at your worksheet and think about these questions:

Where did you spend most of your time (minus school and sleeping)?

Where did you spend the least amount of time?

Did you find yourself primarily alone or hanging out with friends and family?

How much time did you spend intentionally with God?

TIME	ACTIVITY
6:00am	
7:00am	
8:00am	School / Homework
9:00am	School / Homework
10:00am	School / Homework
11:00am	School / Homework
12:00pm	School / Homework
1:00pm	School / Homework
2:00pm	School / Homework
3:00pm	School / Homework
4:00pm	
5:00pm	
6:00pm	
7:00pm	
8:00pm	
9:00pm	
10:00pm	
11:00pm	
12:00am	
1:00am	
2:00am	
3:00am	
4:00am	
5:00am	

Connect Effect

Illustrate when someone's connection made a difference for you, or illustrate how you want to be a difference-maker with your time for someone else. Don't worry if you can't fill out the last box. Often, we may never know how being generous with our time made a difference in someone's life. Use that box to infer what you think or hope might happen.

CONNECT

EFFECT

--

Coach, I am quitting the team. I haven't scored any goals and I'm done.



You should reconsider.
Ask yourself why you chose to play and what your life would be like if you walked away.



I hadn't thought about that. I'd miss my friends a lot.



Not every season will be your best, and that's OK. I encourage you to pray and consider pushing through this rough patch. How about we meet 20 minutes before practice to do some one-on-one drills for the next month?



That sounds good. Thanks for taking the time to help me.



Happy to do it. Now get your ball and get out there!





CARE 4 YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER

UNIT #6: GENEROUS TIME

Use these ways to connect and care for your middle schooler based on the Generous Students® program.

1 Values Check

Your student took inventory of how he/she spends time to identify areas where time might be wasted, used inefficiently, or spent in isolation. Generous Time is using the moments in our day to put Generosity on display. What could be more generous than making connections with other people?

Tip: Talk about the quote below with your student and discuss your family's values. What is most important in your household? Do your kids know this, and are you giving what matters the time it deserves?

We overvalue nonessentials like a nicer car or house or even intangibles like the number of our followers on [social media]. As a result, we neglect activities that are truly essential, like spending time with our loved ones, nurturing our spirit, or taking care of our health.¹

2 Connect THEIR Way.

This stage of life is tricky for both you and your student. It's normal if you're not sure what mood is walking down the stairs in the morning, and it's normal if you encounter five more moods before school drop-off. Remember, this is not personal; it's the brain that is growing and developing.

*Tip: Think about your student. What are his/her interests? What activities do they enjoy/not enjoy? As you pursue a connection to know your student, lean into their world, even if it's not **your** thing. Read a book in the series **they** love, watch **their** favorite show, or visit **their** favorite froyo spot once a week. Right now, connection is the priority, and we encourage you to step into their world to make it more comfortable for everyone.*

3 H.E.L.P.!

Anyone can struggle with starting up a conversation to connect, and this age can bring added awkwardness for students when initiating. We gave your student a HELPful little tip for starting up a good conversation:

- **Hobbies:** Ask, "What are your hobbies or interests?"
- **Entertainment:** Ask, "What is your favorite movie, TV show, or book, or one that you recently thought was amazing?"
- **Life Plans:** Ask, "What are your plans this weekend?" or "Do you have any vacations planned that you are excited about?"

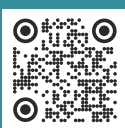
Tip: Some people say it takes just eight minutes to connect meaningfully with someone. ([Check out this article](#) if you need a catch-up with an old friend!) Make it a goal to get a quality, focused, eight-minute connection with your student daily.

¹ McKeown, G. (2021) *Essentialism*. Virgin Books, p. 123.

4 It Takes a Village.

In Generous Students, we closed this unit with a reflection on what we call “The Connect Effect.” Taking the time for one conversation can make a big difference in a person’s life. We often don’t realize how badly the people around us desire to feel known and loved, and one conversation can do wonders.

Tip: While we’d love for our kids to come to us when they need to talk and tell us everything, the truth is they will not. But there is hope! If you haven’t already, think and pray about four adults in your student’s life who can listen, connect, and offer sound advice and wisdom. We’ve heard the phrase since they were babies, and it’s true: It takes a village. Don’t forget to be intentional with your time to build up solid relationships and connections around you as you lead them through these challenging middle school years. We all need the support and help!



Learn more about Generous Classroom™ at
generousclassroom.com

Get inspiration, free downloads, and supplemental ideas by following us on social media: **@GenerousClassroom.**



UNIT #6

GENEROUS TIME

Lesson Extension

MY GENEROUS LIFE PURPOSE POINT

Connection

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

6TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

7TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

8TH GRADE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.



UNIT #6

GENEROUS TIME

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL RESOURCES

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, and Self-Management.

DAILY EMOTIONS CHECK-IN

Incorporate an emotional check-in with your students before each lesson or when needed. Emotional check-ins assist children with understanding their feelings and the feelings of others. Have students identify their emotions by pointing to a picture and explaining how they feel. Download and print our Zones of Regulation/Emotions Check-In that is in the Teacher Portal.

MINDFUL MINUTE

First, sit up straight and close your eyes if you're comfortable doing so. Now, take a slow, deep breath in through your nose for four counts—1, 2, 3, 4—hold it for 2 counts—1, 2—and then slowly breathe out through your mouth for 6 counts—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Let's repeat that a few more times.

As you continue this breathing, think about these words from Psalm 46:10: *"Be still, and know that I am God."*

When life gets busy or overwhelming, God reminds us to be still and trust Him. Each breath you take is a chance to reset your mind and remember that God is in control.

As you breathe in, think *"Be still."* As you breathe out, think *"And know."* Let's repeat that a few times: *"Be still... and know."*

One last deep breath in—hold—and out.

Remember, even in the middle of a busy day, you can always take a moment to pause, breathe, and remind yourself of God's peace.

ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY