

LESSON 3: Inspiring Stories of Kids Who Give



TOTAL TIME:
60 minutes

Objectives



Students will be able to:

- Analyze case studies of changemakers and identify what made their work effective.
- Distinguish between small-scale and large-scale acts of generosity and articulate the value of both.
- Identify one quality from a case study they want to develop in themselves, and explain why.

Guiding Questions

- What makes a young person's act of generosity genuinely effective, not just well-intentioned?
- Does scale matter? Is a small, local act as meaningful as a global movement?
- What separates changemakers who create lasting impact from those who don't?

Materials



- Whiteboard or chart paper and markers
- Case studies
- **Optional:** internet access for independent research into a changemaker of students' choosing

Differentiation Strategies

For students who need more support:

- Provide a graphic organizer structured around the four analysis clues (Problem, Action, Impact, Qualities).
- Allow students to work in pairs for the case study analysis.

For advanced learners:

- Ask students to compare two case studies: what did both changemakers have in common? Where did their strategies differ, and why might that be?
- Have students write an analytical essay: What is the most important quality a young changemaker needs, and why? Use evidence from at least two case studies.

Extension

- Students create an original case study profile of someone from their own community or cultural background who demonstrates generosity, using the Problem → Action → Impact → Qualities framework.
- Students produce a creative response to a case study: a persuasive speech, op-ed, visual art piece, or short documentary script about what inspired them most.

Where could this fit?

- ELA: Practice close reading of nonfiction; analyze argument, evidence, and rhetorical choices in profiles of changemakers.
- Social Studies: Examine how youth movements and individual action have shaped historical and contemporary change.
- Advisory / SEL: Use aspirational role models as a lens for exploring values, identity, and personal strengths.
- After-school / At home: Share a case study with a family member and discuss: What would it take for someone in our community to do something like this?



Introduction

- Open with a discussion: “When you think of a ‘changemaker,’ what image comes to mind? How old are they? Where do they come from?” Surface any assumptions about who gets to create change.
- Tell students: “Today we’re going to examine real case studies of young people who created meaningful change — many of them your age or younger. We’re not just going to be inspired by them; we’re going to analyze what actually made their work effective.”
- Introduce the four analysis clues for case study work:
 - What PROBLEM did they identify?
 - What ACTION did they take?
 - What IMPACT did it have (short and long term)?
 - What QUALITIES made them effective?



10
minutes

Direct Instruction

- Model the analysis process using the example below. Read the case study aloud, then work through each of the four clues together.



15
minutes

Model Case Study: Alexandra Scott

At age four, Alexandra Scott — who had been diagnosed with cancer — set up a lemonade stand to raise money for childhood cancer research. She gave not to help herself, but for other kids with cancer who needed better treatments. When she passed away at age 8, she had raised over \$1 million. Her family continued her mission: Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation has since raised over \$250 million for childhood cancer research and funded thousands of research projects worldwide.

Model analysis:

- Problem: underfunded childhood cancer research
- Action: lemonade stand scaled through community
- Impact: \$250M+ raised, thousands of research grants
- Qualities: altruism, persistence, thinking beyond her own situation

- Highlight for students: “What makes Alexandra’s story powerful isn’t just the scale she eventually reached — it’s that she started with almost nothing and gave anyway. The qualities she showed at age four are the same ones that drove \$250 million in impact.”

Guided Practice

- Divide students into small groups. Assign each group one of the four case studies:
 - E-Train: Kindness Bookmarks (U.S.A.)
 - Lesein Mutunkei: Trees4Goals (Kenya)
 - Esther Ogunbowale: The Generosity Corner (Nigeria)
 - Gavin Duenas: Bottles of Hope (Guam)
- Have each group analyze their case study using the four clues (Problem, Action,

Impact, Qualities) and prepare to share a 2-minute summary with the class.

- After all groups present, facilitate a whole-class synthesis: “What qualities appeared across multiple case studies? What does that suggest about what it takes to create meaningful change?”



15
minutes

Independent/ Group Practice

- Ask students to respond to the prompt below in writing.



15
minutes

Independent Reflection Prompt

From the case studies explored today:

1. Which changemaker’s story resonated with you most, and why? Be specific about what aspect of their work or approach you connected with.
2. What is one quality that person demonstrated that you want to develop in yourself? What would that look like in your own life?
3. Make the case: Does a giving act need to be large-scale to be meaningful? Use evidence from today’s case studies to support your argument.

- Invite 2–3 students to share before the reflection.

Reflection

- Ask: “All of today’s changemakers started with something small. What does that tell us about where meaningful giving begins?”
- Ask: “Is good intention enough? What separates a well-meaning person from an effective changemaker?”
- Reinforce the core idea: “You don’t need permission, resources, or age to begin. What you need is a clear sense of the problem, a genuine commitment to helping, and the willingness to take one concrete step.”
- Optional closing: Ask each student to write one quality from today’s case studies they are committing to bring into their own work.



5
minutes

Handouts

- Case Studies



Icons: SBTS; Flowicon; Gendis Studio; ARIPATUT DASUKI, Selot Lo from the Noun Project



“We hope these Bottles of Hope remind the residents that they are valued and loved.” – Gavin, GivingTuesday Spark Ambassador, Guam

The Challenge

Elders living in skilled nursing facilities can sometimes feel forgotten. Days can pass without a visitor, a kind word, or a reminder that someone out in the world is thinking of them. Loneliness is a real and serious challenge for many older adults, and it can affect their health and happiness.

At the same time, young people often want to help their communities but are not sure where to start. Big problems can feel overwhelming. Gavin wondered: what is something simple, heartfelt, and something kids can actually do that could make a real difference to someone who needs it?

The Action

Gavin, a GivingTuesday Spark Ambassador in Guam, came up with a beautiful idea. He gathered his friends together and asked them to do something anyone can do: write kind words. Together, they wrote encouraging notes and positive affirmations on small slips of paper, filling up decorative jars with messages of hope and warmth.

These jars became the Bottles of Hope. Once filled, Gavin and his team personally delivered them to residents at local skilled nursing facilities, so that elders could reach in and pull out a note whenever they needed a lift. Each jar was a small but powerful reminder that someone cared.

The project was recognized as a blueprint for community service and youth engagement in the Guide to GivingTuesday Spark, and has been shared across the GivingTuesday Spark platform as an example of how small acts of generosity can transform communities.

The Impact

A few jars filled with handwritten notes turned into something much bigger. Here is what changed:

- Elders at skilled nursing facilities in Guam received Bottles of Hope filled with personal, uplifting messages written just for them.
- Young people in Guam discovered that generosity does not require money or special skills, only time, care, and a willingness to show up for someone else.
- The Bottles of Hope campaign was featured in the official Guide to GivingTuesday Spark as a model for other youth leaders around the world to follow.
- The project was shared across the GivingTuesday Spark platform, inspiring other communities to find their own simple ways to spread joy.

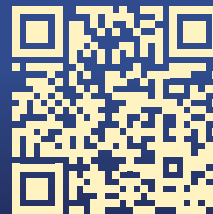


Gavin's project is proof that a jar, some paper, and a kind heart are all you need to remind someone that they are valued and loved.



GIVINGTUESDAY
SPARK

GivingTuesday Spark is a global community of young changemakers sparking generosity and creating real impact in their communities—proving that youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow, but the leaders of today.



Want to Join?

Learn more about GivingTuesday Spark and how to start your own act of generosity at givingtuesday.org/spark