



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## With Hearts and Minds

*An activity of "Don't trap people in racial boxes"*

Once upon a time, literacy meant knowing how to read and write. Nowadays, it means much more than that. We even talk about multiple literacies, which means that a person can be literate in many more ways than in language alone. Let's take a look at one of these — racial literacy.

**Racial literacy** is being able to make sense of racial situations that are stressful and responding in ways that are wise. Read the article "Don't trap people in racial boxes" (page 15, *What's Up* March 2019) to find out more about racial literacy.

To have racial literacy, you must practise **empathy**. Psychologists tell us that there are two parts to empathy. One part is the ability to understand the emotions of others. And, the other part is the ability to join in the experience of others. The first part uses your mind, while the second part involves your heart.

### A PROJECT FOR RACIAL LITERACY

1. As a whole class, view this video thoughtfully.

► **What it takes to be racially literate**

[www.ted.com/talks/priya\\_vulchi\\_and\\_winona\\_guo\\_what\\_it\\_takes\\_to\\_be\\_racially\\_literate](http://www.ted.com/talks/priya_vulchi_and_winona_guo_what_it_takes_to_be_racially_literate)

After high school, teenagers Priya Vulchi and Winona Guo spent a year collecting personal stories about race from over 150 individuals in 50 US states. They gave this talk about their project as part of the TEDWomen 2017 series. The stories are now in a book that they hope will help people grow in racial literacy.

2. Respond to these questions by jotting down your key points on the back of this handout.

- a) What are Priya and Winona hoping to accomplish through their project?
- b) They believe real-life stories have the power to help us to better understand other people's situations. Do you agree? Please elaborate.
- c) They observe that there seems to be both a "mind gap" and a "heart gap" in people's racial literacy. How does this relate to psychologists' findings about empathy?
- d) These two teenagers are very optimistic as they try to raise racial literacy. From what you can see in the video, what other strengths enable them to accomplish their goals?
- e) If you wanted to do a special project to help your schoolmates grow in racial literacy, what would you do? How would your project add to peace and harmony at your school?

3. Share your responses with two or three friends in class. There are no right or wrong answers. By listening to one another, each of you can grow in empathy and, in turn, racial literacy.