



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

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

# Switching Lenses

*An activity of Stories of Casual Racism*

Have you ever played with toy goggles that have changeable lenses? Look through purple lenses and your world becomes purple. Switch to orange lenses and suddenly the same world is orange. Likewise, in real life, we look at our fellow human beings through lenses. Our eyes have lenses that enable us to see.

In addition, it is as if we have a pair of invisible goggles which has changeable lenses. Depending on which lenses you use, what you see in others shifts. Sometimes, we are not aware of the invisible lenses we are using. At other times, we choose to use certain lenses purposely. The following activity explores the use of our invisible coloured lenses.

- 1) Read the stories of casual racism at <http://more.whatsup.sg/>. The author’s lenses used for this series focused on experiences of casual racism. This was purposely done because that was the topic for the nine articles.

A different set of lenses might have highlighted, for instance, kindness to a writer. The writers would then see acts of kindness everywhere he looks. When you look around you, you too have that option of choosing the lenses you want to put in your imaginary pair of goggles.

- 2) Explore switching lenses to spot different types of diversity around you. Conduct a 30-minute observation of a public space in your neighbourhood. Six lenses are listed below. Put on these respective lenses for five minutes. Record in point form what you see.

My lenses by type of diversity	My Observation Details
	Date: __/__/____ Time: from ___ to ___ Place: _____
a) gender	
b) age	
c) body type	
d) skin colour	
e) hair type	
f) clothing	

- 3) Give a five-minute oral presentation in class about the diversity you observed at your chosen place. Comment on what it felt like to switch your lenses as you focused on one type of diversity after another.

Mean kids and adults often look through lenses that identify differences that they can pick on. They use lenses that make it easier to treat people unfairly. Kind and caring people choose to use lenses that see the good in those around them. It is not that they do not see the differences. Rather, they prefer to form healthy relationships with their fellow human beings by valuing both differences and commonalities. Choose your lenses thoughtfully.