



Practicing

## Empathy

Lesson/Activity for CAC Conference

### Background (5 minutes)

Say: In just a moment, we're going to watch a short film about a high school physics teacher named Jeffrey Wright. Students love his class because he uses inspiring and engaging lessons to teach this difficult subject. But more than that, Mr. Wright truly cares for all of his students as learners and people. In this film, he shares a personal story that explains what the greatest energy in the world is.

As you watch this film, be thinking about the word empathy. The definition of empathy is the ability to understand and share in the feelings of others. Empathy can also mean that the more we understand others, the better we know them. By cultivating empathy, we can show appreciation, generosity, good listening skills, love, and trust. If you've ever put yourself in someone else's shoes, well, that's having empathy.

Ask: When you put yourself in someone else's shoes, what happens? Take a few student responses.

Say: As you watch this film, think about people you know or know of who are different from you in any way (gender, ability, economic class, race/ethnicity, etc.). Think about how your experience might change when you are exposed to people who are very different than yourself.

Watch Film (12 minutes) <https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/films/wrights-law>

### Review (10 minutes)

Say: Take a few minutes to write down what empathy or compassion means to you. Do you think it is important for others to understand your feelings? Why or why not? Pause while students write their responses.

Say: When you have written down a few thoughts, complete this sentence: "If you knew me, you would know that..." Your responses can be personal or impersonal. For example, you can share a difficult hardship you've experienced, that's something personal, or share impersonal details such as

you like to play soccer or draw. Ask: Invite volunteers to share their responses to the question.

### Discussion (15 minutes)

Below are some suggested questions for group discussion:

- What can we learn from Mr. Wright? Do you think his behavior inspires kindness in others? If so, how?
- Do you think your learning environment affects the way you learn? Did Wright's students enjoy their environment? Why or why not?
- Do you think helping students emotionally and socially can enhance their academic learning? How does Mr. Wright help his students emotionally and socially?
- Do you think Mr. Wright's positive relationship with himself and his family affects his students? How can positive relationships that show empathy and love lead to a kinder community and society?
- What are some ways to measure the impacts of your actions or behaviors on others?
- What happens when we don't show empathy? What is the opposite of empathy?

### Reflection (3 minutes)

Say: As you go through the year in Calling All Colors, think about empathy and love in your relationships at school, home, church, your community. Try to think to yourself as you go through each day how you have shown these things and how they have been shown to you. You might find there needs to be some change and that's OK. Being aware of that is an important thing. Have safe conversations about it with people you trust, like your CAC group leader, your parents, teachers, etc. Keep the conversations going!