

Racism is an ism to which everyone in the world today is exposed; for or against, we must take sides. And the history of the future will differ according to the decision which we make.' **Ruth Benedict**

**DIVERSI-TEAM**  
Story by Kisha



Hi Coach! How was your camp?

The table tennis was great. Got time for tea? I had an interesting experience.

The camp started with a reception for parents

Parents, let me explain my philosophy. In table tennis, you play only singles or doubles. But all 14 boys in the team must stand united. All 14 must encourage each other. Winning is important. But not as important as good sportsmanship. That's what this camp is all about - becoming a solid team and learning sportsmanship.

Wise coach!

Coach, I like your approach. You're a good role model for Mun.

Yes, yes, Mun is fortunate!

Thank you.

The camp starts with an ice-breaker...

That was fun! Now let's get serious. I want each of you to name one thing you really love. We'll go clockwise. So, John, please start.

Video arcades!

My girlfriend.

Girlfriend?! Eee!

Table tennis.

Ice cream!

Don't butter up coach!

Interesting responses. Now, name one thing you really hate.

Exams.

Durian smell.

Terrorists.

I hate Muslims.

War.

Mun, you can't say that!

Yeah, that's rude.

He said he hates terrorists. Same here. That's why I hate Muslims. My parents say that's just the way they are...

But still...Mun, don't say that here!

Why not, John? There are no Muslims here. If that's what Mun hates most, he can say it. It's just a game.

It's OK to speak your mind, Mun. You were just answering the question. I didn't say we had to like each other's answers.

Coach, you hear it on the news all the time... "Muslim terrorists did this, Muslim terrorists did that"...

Everyone, listen carefully. Those terrorists are only a tiny fraction of Muslims worldwide. The terrorists' methods are not what Islam teaches. There are evil people in every religious group but they are the minority. The majority everywhere want peace. You've heard all this before, right?

You don't know about Muslims, coach. You've just come from China. We in South East Asia, we know.

Mun, do you know any Muslims?

Do your parents know any?

No.

No.

It's hard to tell what people are really like till you get to know them personally. Look at me. Do I look like a terrorist?

Of course not, Coach!

No way, Coach.

But I'm a Muslim!

Yeah! I remember now... there are millions of Muslims in China!

Muslims in China... hey, we learnt that in Social Studies.

Drats - a mini-crisis and we weren't needed!

But you look just like other Chinese.

So? What if I were tanned and wore robes? Would that make me a terrorist? By looking at a person, you can't tell what's in his heart. Religious labels don't make us good or evil. You all know this. But it's not enough to have the knowledge. You have to use it in real life to question your hates and fears. I encourage all of you to think seriously about what I've said. OK, anyone feel like table tennis?

Coach, I'm sorry - I didn't mean to offend you or anything. You've taught me a lesson.

Good job! You opened their minds, Coach.

No problem, Mun. I learnt a thing or two as well - always be prepared for the unexpected from my students!

I didn't need help then. But now, it helps to talk about it. And you're here for me. Hey, that's important, too. You're needed as much as ever, Diversi-team!