

# Enjoying and Navigating Cultural Diversity



## MISSION OBJECTIVES

- A. I will learn more about a person and his or her culture through asking questions in the context of friendship-building activities.
- B. I will describe, interpret, and evaluate - D.I.E. (Cassiday and Stringer 2009, 207) - cultural differences in a way that leads to understanding and deeper relationships.



## TEAM CARE AND ACCOUNTABILITY (20 MINUTES)

1. Who did you meet from another country and what did you learn from the experience? (Share from your *Contact Log*).
2. What did you learn from study #1 in *My Favorite Missionary* and the video clips?
3. What needs or challenges are you facing that we can pray for?
4. Pray together especially for each other and the friends from other cultures whom you have met.



## PRESENTATION (14:28 MINUTES)

**WATCH:** *Enjoying and Navigating Cultural Diversity*. Take notes using the following outline.

1. "Diversity is rooted in the (a)\_\_\_\_\_ activity of God....  
To celebrate creation is to celebrate (b)\_\_\_\_\_ " (Duane Elmer).
2. "For you are all (a)\_\_\_\_\_ of God through (b)\_\_\_\_\_ in  
Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26).

3. D = \_\_\_\_\_ .

4. I = \_\_\_\_\_ .

5. E = \_\_\_\_\_ .

**6. FOUR TIPS:**

**TIP #1** Be a (a) \_\_\_\_\_ .

**TIP #2** Ask how (b) \_\_\_\_\_ would do it.

**TIP #3** Don't be the (c) \_\_\_\_\_ and don't be the (d) \_\_\_\_\_ .

**TIP #4** If not (e) \_\_\_\_\_ , do it their way.

7. "I have become (a) \_\_\_\_\_ things to all men, that I might by

(b) \_\_\_\_\_ means (c) \_\_\_\_\_ some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).



## DISCOVERY AND DISCUSSION (40 MINUTES)

1. How do you feel after watching *Enjoying and Navigating Cultural Diversity* and what did you learn?

2. As we meet people of other cultures we sometimes are confused or frustrated by things they do. Cultures are puzzling. The following activity will help us use the three simple steps we learned in the presentation (D.I.E. D-Description, I-Interpretation, and E-Evaluation).

Read the following scenario in which a person of one culture gives a **description** of something that was strange or frustrating in another culture.

*I just don't understand. I have a friend who really loves a certain girl but he's going to marry someone else. That's so strange! He said it's because his older sister thinks this other girl is best for him. Why would he ever let his sister decide something that important? Shouldn't he marry for love? In fact, their whole culture confuses me. They are so nice and agreeable that I do not know what they are really thinking. Several times I have asked him and his sister if they would like to go to church with me. They have always acted excited and said they would come, but they have never come once. Why don't they just tell me they are too busy or don't want to come?*

3. Let's try to **interpret** the cultural difference by asking questions. What are some possible reasons the person in the other culture is accepting his sister's advice?

4. Why might the people say *yes* when they don't really mean it?

5. Read the interpretation, the explanation, that the person of the puzzling culture might give:

*In my culture leaders, teachers, parents, and older siblings are so important. They have sacrificed so much for us and have a wealth of experience to pass on to us. I am so grateful for what they have done. That is why we pretty much follow what they expect. Sure, sometimes it crosses what I want to do, but I guess I have to make some sort of sacrifice back to them to show the respect and honor they deserve. That brings a sense of peace that I could not find by just doing my own thing. I guess that is what our culture is all about—relationships. We are pretty careful about not disappointing each other. Sometimes we even say we will do something that we don't plan to do just because we don't want to make the person who is asking feel bad. That seems so much better than just telling them straight. Besides our people are pretty good at catching a hint.*

6. Discuss the cultural puzzle using these questions to make an **evaluation**.

💬 Is there anything morally wrong in the scenario on either side of the cultures or are they just two different ways of looking at things?

💬 In what way do you think the two different cultures could balance each other out in an even more positive way than either culture's singular approach?

7. Repeat the process with the next puzzle piece **description** as time allows. Read the following:

*Last year our church sponsored one of the refugee children from the ethnic group that worships in our school building. We paid for him to attend summer camp and also for a whole year at our private church school. We knew his family could not afford it otherwise. The boy loved camp and school. This year we gave the sponsorship to another child from a family that had an even greater need. After a while, I noticed that the family we were no longer helping had stopped coming to church. I asked around and found out the mother had been telling people we treated her child unfairly. I called the mother by phone and tried to explain the church and school policy is to help for one year only and to help equally all who apply. She listened and said, "Sure, that's fine." But they have not been back to church.*

8. Discuss a possible **interpretation** to the puzzling culture above. What are some possible reasons that the person in the other culture acted as he did?

9. Read the **interpretation** that matches below:

*In my culture those with property, money, and influence use it to care for those who are weaker. Once someone extends care and protection to us, we show our appreciation by being loyal and supportive. We will do anything for them. We expect them to continue to provide that care, just like a good parent would. Of course, there are always more people to be helped, but they are not part of the family. It is very shameful to be abandoned and no one wants to stay where others look at them as misfits.*

10. Discuss the cultural puzzle using these questions to make an **evaluation**.

- A. Is there anything morally wrong in the scenario on either side of the cultures or is it just two different ways of looking at things?
  
- B. In what way do you think the two different cultures could balance each other out in an even more positive way than either culture's singular approach?

11. Go through the following form Contrasting Cultures to discover more about your own culture.

- A. Each number has two phrases. Circle A or B to show which phrase best fits how you most often feel or think.

1	I feel great when I accomplish something all by myself.	A	B	I enjoy interacting and working with a team.
2	I am happiest when I know my decisions please my parents, family members, and friends.	A	B	It is important that I be free to make my own decisions, even if others do not like them.
3	I am highly motivated to be on time and I think others should be respectful by doing the same.	A	B	In a meeting or gathering, it is most important to me that everyone arrive and be included, even if we start late.
4	I love anything new and innovative	A	B	I love things that have a history and a story, things that have proved useful over time.
5	People in authority deserve honor and cooperation.	A	B	People who have achieved and accomplished deserve respect.
6	My energy is renewed when I am with other people. I would rather not be alone much.	A	B	When I have a spare moment I love to go for a quiet walk, read, or learn something.
7	Everyone is equal and deserves an opportunity.	A	B	Society runs smoothly when people fulfill their roles well and are content with their place and position.
8	It is important to me to work through problems gently without embarrassing anyone.	A	B	I think conflict should be handled openly and honestly.

9	If there is a problem that needs to be fixed, I will speak up because my opinion can help.	A	B	People should not be dishonored by questioning them in front of others.
10	Rules and laws are the foundation of societies and should be faithfully followed.	A	B	Caring for people's feelings and needs are more important than being exactly right in all a person says or does.
11	We can understand and change our circumstances through careful observation and logical conclusions.	A	B	There is more to life than what we see and spiritual forces should be considered in every situation.

**B.** Go through the list with your team one line at a time and discuss your similarities and differences. *Are any of these differences moral? Why or why not?*

**12.** In what ways do you think the two different cultural perspectives, represented by A and B could balance each other out in an even more positive way than either culture's singular approach?

**13.** What have you learned today and how will you use it this week?



## TEAM PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Pray together for God to continue to lead you to the people He wants you to meet, the specific unreached people groups that He wants you involved in; to give you a deep interest in them and their culture and for their salvation.

### PROMISES TO CLAIM:

- ✔ *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Romans 5:5).*
- ✔ *"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).*
- ✔ *When you rise in the morning, do you feel your helplessness and your need of strength from God? And do you humbly, heartily, make known your wants to your heavenly Father? If so, angels mark your prayers, and if these prayers have not gone forth out of feigned lips, when you are in danger of unconsciously doing wrong and exerting an influence which will lead others to do wrong, your guardian angel will be by your side, prompting you to a better course, choosing your words for you, and influencing your actions (White 1875, 363).*



## ASSIGNMENTS (5 MINUTES)

1. What do you plan to do to follow up on any of the friendships you have developed? Stay diligent on updating the *Contact Log*. You will find it more and more useful for prayer and follow-up. As you pray, ask God to show you what He thinks is best for the next step in caring for your contacts.
2. Mobilize and Multiply. Share with a friend or family member what you learned about understanding cultural differences. Encourage him or her to do one of the activities in the *Lesson 2 Field Activity: Cultural Study*.
3. Research a specific unreached people group where you live or in the nearest metro area to your home. Use *Lesson 2 Field Activity: Cultural Study* to prepare at least a two-page report or five-minute presentation to share with your team.
4. Complete study #2 in *My Favorite Missionary* and focus your prayers on “Many Languages” in *Praying for the World Next Door*.
5. Watch the following video clips:  
Dr. Conrad Vine shows the power of humility for cultural learning; Pastor Philip Tangal shares his story and insights into reaching Nepali Hindus.
6. Complete the form: *Field Report #2*.

## LESSON 2 FIELD ACTIVITY: CULTURAL STUDY





Our culture is our life. It is who we are. As a truly caring cross-cultural missionary you will want to learn all you can about the countries and cultures of your new international friends. The more you know and understand, the closer you will come to their hearts and beliefs. Here are many questions that you can ask. They are placed in the setting of more possibilities for spending time together. Use some of these to gather information to write at least a two-page cultural report. Include the name of the people group, their country and basic population information for the group both in their country and where they have migrated (for helps see [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net) and [people-groups.info](http://people-groups.info)).

You can also look online and in libraries for further information. The *World Factbook* provides information on the history, people, government, economy, geography, communications, transportation, military, and transnational issues for 267 world entities. ([cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/](http://cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/))

### 1. Eat Together

You might ask your new friend if you can take him or her out to eat at a restaurant that serves food from his or her country. As you order, tell your friend about any particular way you eat (if you are vegetarian, don't eat pork, or can't handle spicy food). This will help for a future time when you might cook together and eat at your friend's house or yours. It will help you all to know how to make food in a way that accommodates each other in advance. If your friend likes to cook, ask to be taught how to make a culturally important recipe like flat bread, a rice dish, or a favorite dessert.

#### You might ask questions like:

-  What kind of food do people typically eat in your home country?
-  What is your favorite food from your home country?
-  Back home do people usually use a spoon and fork or some other kind of utensil?
-  Who eats together and who does not eat together?

List ideas for additional food-related questions that you could ask your new friends:

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### 2. Spend Time in a Park

Plan a time to get together in the park with your new international friend and his or her family or friends. You might ask your friend to teach you some games from the country your friend came from. You can also share some games that you know.

Enjoy the beauty of nature together, gathering leaves, observing birds, etc. Compare typical trees, flowers, animals in your region and your friend's homeland. You could also bring food for a picnic.

**You might ask questions like:**

- 💬 What kind of sports and games are popular with the young people in your home country?
- 💬 What do you like to do when you have some free time?
- 💬 Please tell me about some of the most beautiful places in your home country.

List additional games and nature-related questions that you could ask your new friend or list ideas that you could share about games and nature from your country:

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**3. Share Holiday Celebrations**

Many new arrivals are eager to understand and participate in local holidays. Invite your international friends to join you in your celebrations. Through the things you do together and other things you observe and talk about, you can teach about your culture and values, pointing out both good and bad things. Pray for opportunities to emphasize family, moral, and spiritual values that are important to you and that will draw them closer to God. Think about what you could do to build friendships and talk about important values on the various holidays throughout the year.

Ask your new friend if he will soon celebrate any of his home country's holidays. Ask if it would be okay for you to join and observe. Learn something about the holiday in advance so you can know how to ask good questions. This may also help you avoid some spiritual activity on the holiday that would conflict with the Bible and your convictions.

**You might ask questions like:**

- 💬 What holiday in your home country do you especially enjoy? Why?
- 💬 What did you enjoy about our holiday celebration?
- 💬 What things did we do that you want to understand more about?

What holidays or commemorations are coming up in the next few months? List ideas of how you could use these holidays to build a positive friendship with someone of another culture:

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#### 4. Learn More About Their Country and Culture

Ask your new friend to teach you about her culture. You might find books about her country that will help you and her know what to talk about. Learn about the way they dress, eat, live, and work. You could ask her to speak in her language and to show you what it looks like when written. Try to learn some of the basics of her language, both spoken and written. You might want to see if she could share some music from her country as well. Perhaps she even has a national costume and headdress she could show you. Look up the meaning behind your new friend's country's flag. Many people have strong connection to their flag and the significance of the colors and design. Ask to see pictures of family and culture from their home country.

#### Here are some other questions you might ask about country and culture:

- 🗣️ What do people in your home country do when they greet each other (shake hands, kiss, raise their hands together, palm to palm, etc.)?
- 🗣️ How do you show hospitality when someone visits your home and what do you do when you visit someone else's home?
- 🗣️ When do people typically give gifts in your home country and what do they give?
- 🗣️ In their home country what are the major natural resources, kinds of foods, and exports?
- 🗣️ What is the general education level and what are the main jobs in their country?
- 🗣️ What are the most respected careers in your home culture and what careers are looked down on?
- 🗣️ What are some significant things that happened in your people's history?
- 🗣️ What happens in a marriage ceremony in your home country?
- 🗣️ What are the major diseases and health challenges back in your home country?
- 🗣️ What cultural differences have you noticed between your home country and here?

Are there any cultural "rules" that your friend may need to know about your country in comparison to his or her culture? What are these practices and what should your friend understand about them?

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#### 5. Learn More About Their Present Community and Needs

- 🗣️ For your people who have come to this country, what are the greatest needs?
- 🗣️ Who do you know that's meeting those needs?
- 🗣️ If you could help your community in any way, what kind of help or program would you want to do?

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