



As You Like It by William Shakespeare (Bob Jones University Classic Players)

Suddenly all is quiet. The flurried activity of the last few hours comes to an end. The months of preparation draw to a close. But this is not an end; it is a beginning. Tonight is opening night. You wait, breathless, for the director to signal the stagehands. Your lines race through your head. Attempting to calm yourself, you smooth your costume, breathe deeply, and take your opening stance. The director signals. The curtain rises. You are now onstage to the delight of your audience and yourself.

If you have ever had a part in a school play or program, you remember the excitement of the occasion. For weeks, or even months, you learned your lines. Your costume was made and pressed. The stage crew worked hard to

build props for each scene. The director led you through many practices to help you do your part just right. When performance time came, everyone hoped for a successful production.

What goes into making a play? First, a play has roles—different characters whose actions tell the play's story. Each character has his own personality and actions. Second, a play requires a place to happen—a stage. The stage may be in a clump of trees in your back yard or in an elegant European opera house. It is usually set with scenery and props that add to the action of the play. Third, a drama follows a script that gives the plot of the play. These three elements make a drama a complete production.

The Drama of World Studies

The elements of *world studies* are similar to those in a play. In world studies the roles are played both by individuals and groups of people. Their lives and actions make up their culture. **Culture**, or way of life, is the first element of world studies. The second element is **geography**, through which we learn about the stage, or the earth. The great variety of the earth's landscapes and resources affects the world's cultures. The third element, the script, is history. **History** is the record of how people have lived and what they have done on the earth. Culture, geography, and history are the three elements of world studies.

Plays also have directors to guide the actors and to keep order. In world studies we recognize God as the director of the world's people. In a play the actors are responsible to follow the director's instructions. The person who most closely follows these instructions will have played his role the best. In the drama of world studies, you are under God's direction. The better you follow His instructions, the better you will live your life.

Culture

Culture means way of life. You share the same culture with many other people around you because they live in much the same way that you do. They may not get up in the morning at the same time you do or dress in the same brand of clothes that you wear. Nevertheless, your family, friends, fellow church members, neighbors in your community, and even many of your fellow countrymen have similar activities, interests, and opportunities. Thus, you have a shared culture—a shared way of life—with them.

For example, many Americans enjoy watching and playing baseball, a distinctively Ameri-



Shared culture fades the lines of ethnic diversity.

can activity. Most Americans claim some form of Christianity as their religion. Americans also expect to elect their governmental leaders and to buy and sell goods and services in local businesses. These features are part of the basic American culture.

People living in other countries often have much different cultures. They speak different languages and play different games. They may be ruled by a powerful dictator. They may have to raise most of the food they eat. Their children may not be able to attend school. The different experiences of these people set their cultures apart from yours.

You will be able to understand other cultures by comparing them with your own culture. As you compare specific activities of your way of life with those of others, you will see differences and similarities. To help you in this study, we will divide culture into six areas.

1. Government

Every group of people has some form of government, or way of ruling itself. For example, a government may be ruled by an all-powerful king, a committee of ten members, or a pure democracy in which each citizen votes on every issue. As we study different cultures, ask yourself, "How do these people govern themselves? What is their form of government?"



2. Economics

Every group of people has used the earth's resources to make or grow goods to use or sell. Bartering for a sweet potato crop in a South American street market or purchasing a complex computer by special order from a Japanese company are both examples of economic activities. "What do these people produce? How and what do they buy and sell?" are the economic questions you should ask about each group of people.



3. Religion

Every group of people has some religious beliefs and some form of worship. They may bow to idols, follow a man's teaching, or obey the truth of Scripture. To find out about religion, ask, "What and how do they worship? What are their beliefs?"



4. Society

Every group of people has families and communities that make up its society. A society may tend to have large families or small families, several social classes or none. In this area you will also find information about daily life and customs. Ask the questions "What are their families and communities like? What are some of their daily activities?"



5. Thought and Learning

Every group of people forms ideas and has some way of teaching its members. This area includes achievements in speaking, writing, mathematics, science, and thought. It also includes their methods of education. The questions to ask are "What do they think about? How do they learn?"



6. Arts and Crafts

Every group of people has arts and crafts. Art includes painting, sculpture, architecture, and music. Crafts are handmade items used as decoration, household items, or tools. Pottery, fabrics, and jewelry are some examples of crafts. As you study each group, ask yourself, "What are their arts and crafts?"

