

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION C.S. FORD'S 33 CUSTOMS

C.S. Ford was a famous anthropologist. An anthropologist is an individual who studies different cultures. This might include customs, religious beliefs, social expectations, eating habits, health habits, marriage and death rites.

Ford discovered that there were certain cultures that viewed their race as superior. This is known as *ethnocentrism*. Throughout history, these cultures would try to impose their will on others because of that view.

In order to reduce ethnocentrism, C.S. Ford completed a universal study using as many cultures as he could around the globe. In the study, he identified 33 customs that our American society had certain "rules" about. He had various cultures across the world rank the importance of the customs on the list according to their culture. The lists were returned, and as expected, the customs vary greatly among all cultures; however, there were five customs on the list that all cultures agreed were important to their society. They are as follows:

- All cultures give their individuals a name. Names are important and many have patterns by which their names are given.
- All cultures have some form of death rites. These rites are closely connected to their religious beliefs. Death rites are an important custom in each culture.
- All cultures have some form of marriage rites. Whether they are formal or informal, some type of ceremony is used to unite a man and woman together.
- All cultures have rules governing eating--things you should or should not eat. Foods are also frequently connected with religious rites and ceremonies.
- Clothing oneself is an important part of a culture. It also provides some identity for a culture. Even in cultures that may not wear lots of clothes, the body is adorned with jewelry, paints, feathers, etc.

C.S. Ford concluded that when there is an understanding of a different culture's social habits, religious beliefs, and ceremonies, ethnocentrism is decreased.