

# Cultural Inclusion and Expansion



## Module 2 – Unity

### Week 10

**Title:** What does unity in diversity mean and how does one practice it?

**Spiritual Principle:** To deepen our understanding of the unity in diversity, so that visitors from all faiths and cultures can know that we truly are a universal and all-inclusive multi-faith organization.

**Quote:**

*“You have to enquire yourself as to what extent you have understood the principle of love which is uniformly present in all; differences arise because of our perception and feelings. Right from the beginning man is carried away by his identification with the body and, therefore, he perceives diversity in creation. In fact, it is unity alone that permeates the apparent diversity. Whatever differences are there, they are only the creations of the mind. If one wants to eliminate these differences and realize the principle of unity in diversity, one has to realize his true nature. It is only when you turn your perception away from this fact of unity will you experience diversity. Therefore turn you cognitive faculties on the principle of unity.”*

– Sathya Sai Speaks, March 21, 2004

<https://sathyasai.us/devotion/discourse/recognise-fundamental-principle-onesness>

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How do different perceptions and feelings arise? How is it that different people have different take-away of the same situation?

**Activity/ Life Application:**

[Note to Facilitator - Time permitting few individuals can share a summary of their Pair Share discussion with the bigger group. Life application is an extension of Group activity where the participant practices the Study Circle learnings during the week.]

1. Pair Share  
Pair with a person sitting next to you. Take turns answering the following question.  
With regards to Cultural Inclusion and Expansion, what specific steps might we take in our daily lives to realize the principle of unity in diversity?

**Affirmation:**

[Participants can affirm this every day during the week.]

I see God in one and all.

# Cultural Inclusion and Expansion



## Week 11

**Title:** What does unity in diversity mean and how does one practice it?

**Spiritual Principle:** To deepen our understanding of the unity in diversity, so that visitors from all faiths and cultures can know that we truly are a universal and all-inclusive multi-faith organization.

### **Quote:**

*“The mysteries of creation are marvelous. When two persons meet at any time or place, the differences between them are patent. Their forms and manner differ. They differ in their cleverness and intelligence. Their opinions vary. Without understanding what underlies these differences, the materialist thinkers emphasize the differences. Today, growing numbers of intellectuals, ignoring the unity that underlies the diversity, propagate the cult of differences. The good persons who realize the unity behind the apparent diversity are dwindling in numbers from day to day. This is highly unfortunate. Man’s foremost task is to recognize the unity that underlies the multiplicity.”*

– Sathya Sai Speaks, July 21, 1993

<https://sathyasai.us/devotion/discourse/divine-and-destiny/>

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What are some common characteristics and aspirations among Americans of All Origins?

### **Activity/ Life Application:**

[Note to Facilitator - Time permitting few individuals can share a summary of their Pair Share discussion with the bigger group. Life application is an extension of Group activity where the participant practices the Study Circle learnings during the week.]

1. Pair Share

Pair with a person sitting next to you. Take turns answering the following question.  
How can we better utilize these common characteristics and aspirations inside and outside of our centers?

### **Affirmation:**

[Participants can affirm this every day during the week.]

I see God in one and all.

# Cultural Inclusion and Expansion



## Week 12

**Title:** What does unity in diversity mean and how does one practice it?

**Spiritual Principle:** To deepen our understanding of the unity in diversity, so that visitors from all faiths and cultures can know that we truly are a universal and all-inclusive multi-faith organization.

### **Quote:**

*“All acts of worship have a spiritual significance. Now-a-days, people do not understand their inner significance, but give up not only their hair but also waste a lot of money and return home without being any the wiser for the trip. You may install idols and worship them. But do not forget the inner significance of all worship. All external activities are necessary only to help you to get into the spirit of non-duality and experience unity in diversity. Love and sacrifice are very important. Where there is pure, unsullied, selfless, sacred and sublime love there is no fear at all. Giving and not getting is the underlying principle of spiritual saadhana. Your heart is full of love, but you are using it only for selfish purposes instead of diverting it towards God. God is in the heart and not in the head. The heart is Prema mayam (full of love). On these festival days, you should remember that God is one, and all religions uphold the same principle of "One God, who is omnipresent." You should not have contempt for any religion, as each is a pathway to God. Fostering love towards your fellow-beings, receive the noble love of the Divine. This is the goal of life.”*

– Sathya Sai Speaks, September 9, 1994

<https://sathyasai.us/devotion/discourse/spiritual-significance-ganesha-worship>

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How can our diverse external activities lead us to an inner experience of unity in diversity?
2. In addition to routine service activities, how can we foster love towards our fellow-beings of all cultures in practical ways?

### **Activity/ Life Application:**

[Note to Facilitator - Time permitting these activities can be done as part of the current Study Circle, during a subsequent study circle, or at home with family members. Life application is an extension of Group activity where the participant practices the Study Circle learnings during the week.]

### **Brainstorm Activity**

# Cultural Inclusion and Expansion



1. Brainstorm some common stereotypes or over-generalizations regarding various faiths and ethnicities that you may have heard or which you believe may be prevalent in the United States. (Please recall that brainstorming generates a quick 'working list' and is done without assessment, comment, or editing.)
2. If it is needed, narrow your list to those items that all agree have relevance for the Study Circle's topic of Unity and can serve to enhance objective perception, sense of inclusion, and expand participants understanding.
3. Now going down your list, assume you have just heard a stereotype expressed— not so much in a malicious or hateful manner, but simply based on a misperception, insensitive generalization, or lack of cultural awareness or familiarity. How would you respond so that unity, inclusion, and practical understanding are highlighted and enhanced?

Once the list has been affirmed by the larger group (Step 2), the focal part of the activity (Step 3) can be carried out as a Pair Share or in small groups up to 4 or 5. Highlights from each smaller discussion may be shared with the larger group.

4. Discuss this activity with someone who did not attend the Study Circle, and ask how they might respond to one or more of the chosen stereotypes or over-generalizations.

## **Affirmation:**

[Participants can affirm this every day during the week.]

I see God in one and all.