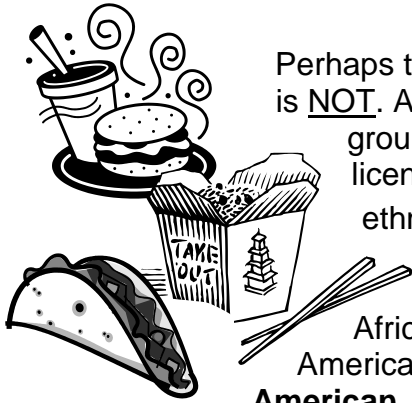


# ETHNIC GROUPS

An **ethnic group** is a group of people who share **cultural practices** and **values** that have been part of their community for generations. They often share the same characteristics that their parents and grandparents shared – such as language, history, food, music, stories, beliefs, and celebrations. Common **interests** bind them together and sometimes influence or shape their actions. Members of an ethnic group often feel close to each other because they share the same **culture** and their **ancestors** came from the same country or area. In fact, the word "ethnic" comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, which means "people" or "nation".



Perhaps the easiest way to understand what an ethnic group is is to point out what it is **NOT**. All the **citizens** of a country do not necessarily belong to the same ethnic group. All citizens of the United States, for example, may carry a U.S. driver's license and qualify to vote in U.S. elections. But they belong to many different ethnic groups. Most Americans come from the white, or Caucasian, descendants of European settlers. Other Americans are part of smaller ethnic groups whose members are descended from immigrants from African, Asian, and Central American countries. All these people may be American citizens, but they are members of different ethnic groups – **European American, African American, Asian American, Native American, Hispanic**, etc..



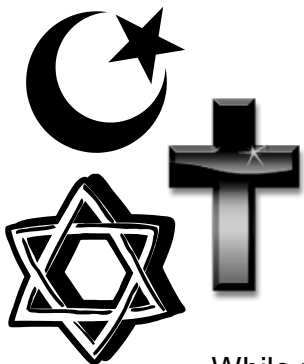
A **family** is not an ethnic group. Members of a family have the same ancestors and often share a common "culture". They may share certain jokes and words that other families do not know. But the family is too small a unit to be called an ethnic group in itself. It takes many different families of the same culture to form an ethnic group. In some cases, a family may even have a mixture of ethnic groups. For instance, the father may be from the African American ethnic group and the mother may come from the Hispanic ethnic group.



Gracias

Merci

# RELIGIOUS GROUPS



A **religious group** is a group of people who share a **belief system** in a particular **god** or **gods**, with a specific set of **rituals** and **sacred text** (*writing*). There are many different religions practiced throughout Asia and Africa. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are the three major religions of Southwest Asia (Middle East). People who follow Judaism are called Jews. Followers of Christianity are called Christians. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. In South and East Asia, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shinto are the major religions. In Africa, people mainly practice Christianity, Islam, and traditional beliefs.

While people of the same ethnic group may practice the same religion, this is not always true. People may share the same religion but still be from different cultures or ethnic groups. For example, people who practice the religion of Christianity could be from any ethnic group - Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, etc.. In other words, a religious group can be made up of people from different ethnic groups.