Diversity and Unity in Religions
Religions everywhere make use of the same basic building blocks

I. Supernatural Beliefs
Beliefs that attribute human-like characteristics to non human things

*These beliefs do not have immediate practical consequences.*
Because these beliefs do not have immediate practical consequences, they can be among the most diverse parts of human cultures.

Deva-Dasi Dancers
Contrast the different ideas about human sexuality in western religions with the treatment of sexuality as a means of experiencing the divine in the 10th – 13th century southern Indian Hinduism..

Pueblo Indians
Survived by gardening in the desert southwest of the U.S. prayed to clouds for rain.

Western Religions Personify God
Although rejecting physical anthropomorphism regarding God, they responds to human languages, feels love and compassion, and make decisions just as humans do.

Dobuans and Yams
Dobuans believe that Yams travel underground at night to visit other gardens much like young men visit neighboring villages at night..

II. Strong Feelings and Emotions
Feelings are often stronger in religious setting than they are in mundane ones.

*Awe, reverence, dread of things because they are strange or unusual.*

Ringing Stones
Ringing stone in southern California considered sacred.
Waterfalls, Caves
Unusual features of natural environment often treated as places of spiritual power.

*Religious settings associated with catharsis-relief from distressful emotions.*

18th Century Frontier New York
Religious enthusiasm, swooning, and “bodily exercises at camp revivalisms.

Holiness Churches of Appalachia
Speaking in tongues, shouting, and swooning remain common today.

III. Ritual Practices
All religions include both personal rituals and ceremonies performed in group settings.

*Personal Rituals*

Personal Prayer

*Ritual for individual performed another individual.*

Shoshone Shaman
Shaman would perform a curing ritual

*Ritual for group performed by an individual.*

Priest
Performance of rites for a congregation by a pastor.

*Rituals performed as a group.*

Singing Hymns