



Culture Skit Script

- I. Introduction
- II. Skit
- III. Debrief questions

I. Introduction

Gather your whole team for this village experience. Also, invite two non-team members to help with the village skit: a Translator (**Moussa**) and a **Chief**. Give both a script and explain the activity. Explain they will speak to each other in a babble the team can't understand.

Only the **Team Leader**, **Chief**, and **Moussa** will need a script. **Team Members** must listen and follow along the conversation.

Explain the following to your team:

“You are about to enter into a village for the first time. This will be very similar to what you will experience on your village trip, though villages vary. It is typical African culture to welcome strangers warmly.

When you arrive in a village for the first time, you will most often greet a Chief, an elder, or the head of an important household for formal introductions. You are going to simulate what it is like to make these formal introductions.

As you file into the Chief or elder's compound, men should enter first, shake the hand of the Chief and say hello. Women should also greet him, but only shake his hand if he extends it. Men sit first, then women.

As you sit, imagine chickens weaving through your feet, donkeys braying nearby and about 50 children gathered around to stare at the strangers. Usually, somebody will show you which seat to take. Then, the formal introductions begin! The Chief expects there to be a male spokesperson for the group, so the Team Leader will do most of the talking.

This is our local translator, Moussa.” (Moo'-sah)

II. Skit

(Chief is sitting in chair with chairs arranged around him in a circle. Group comes up with Moussa. Chief rises as the group walks in and shakes the hands of the men, greeting them in his language. If the team members know the greeting, each one should use it as they pass by the Chief. Chief greets women, but no touching. Chief tells each person which chair to sit in, seating women last and furthest from him.)

(Silence for a few moments)

Chief: speaks in garbled language

Moussa: *(Translating what chief said)* The **Chief** welcomes you and wants to know if your people have peace today.

(Chief offers the Team Leader a cup of water with RIGHT hand. Team Leader accepts with RIGHT hand, sips, and passes to the team member to his RIGHT to tempt that person to take it with the left hand. If they try to take it with the left hand, Team Leader should correct them. Team members can respectfully decline the water if they have water bottles already.)

Team Leader: Yes, we have peace today. Do your people have peace?

Moussa: *speaks in garbled language to Chief*

Chief: *garbled language to Moussa*

Moussa: Yes, his people have peace and great excitement about the visitors.

Team Leader: Thank you. My name is _____. We have come from America to greet your people.

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: He says you are most welcome and his people are glad to greet you. He says he is happy to see that you are all very fat.

Team Leader: Thank you. How is your family?

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: He says his family is doing well. He wants you to meet his sons later, but they are working in the fields now.

Chief-Moussa: He also said his youngest daughter is sick with malaria.

Team Leader: We will intercede to God for Him to restore her vitality.

Moussa: *(pauses, confused)* I do not understand what you have said to me.

Team Leader: Okay. Hmmm. We will pray to God to bring her health.

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: He says thank you.

Team Leader: Is the cultivation of your agriculture going well this year?

Moussa: *(pauses, confused)* I do not understand.

Team Leader: Okay. How are the crops?

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: He says the crops grow well.

Team Leader: How is the rain?

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: He says the rain falls enough. He wants to know if your people are well.

Team Leader: Yes, they are all well. I would like to introduce those who are with me.

Moussa: *translates for the Chief*

(Team Leader instructs the first team member to say her/his name and where he/she lives.)

Team member #1: My name is _____ and I am from _____.

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: The Chief said he thinks he has heard of this place. He wants to know if that is near the village across the river that has the fish market on Thursdays.

Team Leader: No, it is much farther away than that. It is over the ocean.

Moussa: I do not think this language has a word for “ocean.”

Team Leader: Okay, it is very far away in America, across the big water.

Moussa: *translates for Chief*

(Team Leader instructs other team members to introduce themselves with more general geography, like, “I live in big city/small village in the mountains/near a lake, etc.)

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: The Chief says you are all very welcome.

(Silence – 25 seconds to stare at each other. This is typical for Africans, though awkward for Americans. Moussa calms anyone that tries to speak.)

Chief-Moussa: The Chief wants to know why you have come to his village.

Team Leader: We have come a long way because we have been praying for your people and we want to share a message with them.

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: He is happy to listen to whatever message you have for him.

(Team Leader asks team members if one of them would like to share the Creation to Christ story or their two-minute testimony. If nobody wants to, Team Leader can share, bit by bit, so it can be translated along the way. Chief listens intently.)

Team Leader: Has the Chief processed this message of salvation?

Moussa: I don't understand what you have said.

Team Leader: Okay, does the Chief have any questions about what we have told him?

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: No, he says he understands well what you have said.

Team Leader: Has he ever heard this story before?

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: No, never.

Team Leader: We tell you these stories because we want to share how one can honor God and have a good relationship with Him.

Moussa: *translates, Chief nods his head.*

Team Leader: Does he want to follow this God of Jesus?

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: The Chief said he will think about what you have said, but the people here are Muslim. But he wants the old men of this village to hear what you have said.

Team Leader: Can we gather the village tonight and explain some more about Jesus?

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: The Chief said he will gather the people of his village here for you after the meal.

Team Leader: Thank you.

Moussa: *translates, Chief bobs head affirmatively.*

(Silence for 20 seconds)

Team Leader: Now we must ask for the road and we will return after the meal.

Moussa-Chief-Moussa: The road is there, but only half of it.

Team Leader: Thank you for your hospitality.

Moussa: *translates*

(Team files out, shaking the Chief's hand as you go, even the women. Absolutely no hugs.)

III. Debrief Questions

- What surprised you about this village encounter?
(That it was so formal; the chief was so open; only one person did most of the talking.)
- What did you learn about the proper way to greet?
(Greetings are formal and take a long time, etc.)
- What are ways to show proper respect to the chief?
(Follow his lead, only shake hands if he shakes hands, etc. Explain to the team that different chiefs have different rules, so it is important to ask and observe in each situation. For example, sometimes you should never look the chief in the eye nor have your head higher than his, including when departing. Some chiefs will not let anyone touch them; others shake hands only with men. Women should never extend their hand first – let the chief take the lead. If he does not, women should bow and move on.)
- What did you learn about working through a translator?
(Use simple words, phrases, geography etc.)
- When a West African mentions you are fat, this is a compliment -- it means you are viewed as being healthy and prosperous. How did you feel about that?
- How did you react when the chief handed around a communal cup of water? When you are really in the village, where do you think that water comes from?
(Likely from a well. Water from a covered well is usually safe to drink, but ask your missionary for guidance.)
- Did you feel prepared to share the Gospel when the chief asked for your message?
- A team doesn't always have a chance to share that quickly, but it can happen. What do you need to do to be more prepared for opportunities like this one?
- While one person is talking, what can the other team members be doing?
(Listening respectfully; praying silently.)
- Did you notice the African phrase the Team Leader used when requesting permission to leave?
(He asked for the road. Giving half the road means you are sad to see your visitors leave. This phrase is used in most of West Africa. Ask your missionary if it is relevant.)
- What are different things you would like to tell or ask the chief or village elder?
(About your church? Family? Ask for prayer requests? Ask him more about his village?)
- Did anyone realize any fears or questions they need to pray about or ask the missionary about?