*The Well* Socratic Seminar Questions

* Explain why George Melbourne doesn’t laugh along with the Simmses and Dewberry when they are taunting Hammer at the creek? Why does he not support David and Hammer’s claim that the Simmses threatened to poison the well? How do his actions explain why Jim Crow laws existed and why the Civil Rights Movement was so difficult in the South?
* Think about the scene with the molasses bread. What do you think about the interaction between Ma (Caroline) and the Sheriff? Did Ma handle it correctly? Could she have done something different?
* Why did Ma Rachel react so strongly to Mama (Caroline) whipping Hammer and David?
* How are Ma Rachel and Hammer similar? Do you think she influenced the way he thinks?
* How would you define family? What makes a family a family? How would you describe the Logan family?
* Do you think the scene where Hammer and David are whipped would have turned out differently if Pa (Paul-Edward) had been home?
* What do you think about how children are punished in this era? Do you think it’s an effective form of punishment? How are you punished at home?
* Why did Charlie tell his father that both Hammer and David jumped him with a 2x4” the first time? Why didn’t Charlie tell his father about the second time that Hammer beat him down? Why doesn’t Hammer conform to what is expected of him?
* What do you think about the story Pa (Paul-Edward) tells his boys about his own daddy beating him? Do you think Pa actually is thankful for that whipping, even though it was unfair?
* Why is Old Man McCalister so angry with his boys at poisoning the well, considering he doesn’t like the Logans and thinks white people are superior?
* If you could change anything about the story, what would it be? Think realistically, much how Mrs. Taylor has written the book.
* What other questions would you like the group to reflect on?