**Discussion Questions**

The following questions are intended for general use with all titles in this theme. They have been developed to encourage a deeper discussion among participants and to provide general guidance and direction. Facilitators and participants are encouraged to research, prepare, and engage with additional questions specific to the book they are discussing at each session.

1. What is your own personal definition of the terms “race,” “racism,” and “discrimination”? How do you think your definitions might be similar or different to how the characters or author of the book define these terms? How important is it for people to start with common definitions for these words when discussing the topic?
2. What types of overt and subtle incidents of racism are portrayed in these books? Who were often the offenders, and who were the victims? In what contexts do we encounter these behaviors, and what do we see as the possible causes or motivations?
3. To what extent do discriminatory practices, as experienced by the characters in these books, reflect the exercise of power, privilege, and control?
4. Within the story of the book, how does discrimination exacerbate fear, suspicion, hopelessness, violence, hatred, mental health, poverty, and/or sorrow? What other short or long-term impact does discrimination have on the characters of the book?
5. Take a moment to consider a point in life you have felt like an outsider – this could be either in your family setting, workplace, or membership in a professional, educational, recreational, sporting, religious, or business group. What specific factors made you feel like an outsider, and how did you deal with these feelings? Do you recognize these feelings or experiences in the characters of the book?
6. Have these readings highlighted or helped you recognize forms of discrimination, racism, or bigotry that you may not have previously understood as being discriminatory, harmful, or problematic? Why or why not?
7. These books engage with history, place, home, inequality, injustice, and citizenship. Consider the problems of indigeneity and rights – who has a more legitimate claim to citizenship rights and privileges in the United States? What makes this claim more or less deserving? On what facts or conditions did you arrive at this conclusion? In what ways have the authors attempted to refute this idea or corroborate it? You may want to highlight what values you consider as central to the American heritage first, to better situate opinions about immigrants and the place of people of color in America.
8. How do our concepts and understandings of borders (geo-political, social, economic) affect our perceptions of race and identity? In what ways are borders—and the distinctions they draw— real and in what ways are they social constructs that shift with time and culture? What are the roles or borders in the larger question of American heritage?
9. What solutions do the writers proffer for the varied and complex problems they narrate in their books? Do the authors see their role primarily as dispassionate storytellers or informed actors who can offer solutions to entrenched social issues? What practical steps, if any, do they offer to end racism or at least mitigate it in the United States?