

The Grapes of Wrath

The Grapes of Wrath is an American realist novel written by John Steinbeck and published in 1939. The book won the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and it was cited prominently when Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1962. The 1940 drama film was directed by John Ford.

Discussion Questions:

1. Remember when the mother and father were talking as they sat in the cab of the truck and the mother stated her belief that the rich men come but their sons are not as strong as the fathers and fall by the wayside if there is adversity. In contrast, families like the Joads just keep on going no matter what adversity befalls because they are "the people." What was she trying to say and do you agree with it?
2. What did the mother mean when she told her son "We ain't the kissin' kind"?
3. Why did Tom Joad have to leave the family?
4. Why was the ex-preacher, Casey, killed?
5. Why did the deputy sheriffs burn transient camps?
6. Why did the deputy sheriffs need a warrant or a fight before they came into the camp?
7. Tom Joad had a religious belief in "The one big soul that belongs to everybody." How does this compare to the teachings of Buddha, or to "The Force" in "Star Wars"?

Social-Emotional Learning Discussion Questions:

1. Who kept the family together and emerged as the person to whom all others turned for support?
2. A theme of this story is that when family circumstances radically change it is the women that keep the family together. The father admits that he is lost and always thinking of the way it had been before. The son-in-law runs away. Tom has to leave to avoid being arrested. Do you agree with Steinbeck that, in general, women can deal with total disruption of their prior way of life better than men?

FAIRNESS

(Play by the rules; Take turns and share; Be open-minded; listen to others; Don't take advantage of others; Don't blame others carelessly)

1. Was it fair that the Oakies were turned out of their farms and left with only migrant farm work to maintain themselves and their families