

Socratic Seminar Guide

The Pilgrim's Progress vs. "The Celestial Railroad"

Topic:

C.S. Lewis wrote in his book *Mere Christianity*, "We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive" (Lewis 36). Both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and "The Celestial Railroad" seek to warn their readers about the pitfalls of this world that can lead a believer off the road of eternal life. While Bunyan's work addresses many trials, Vanity Fair seems to be described in detail in both stories. The focus of this discussion will be on each "pilgrim's" time in that city.

Preparation:

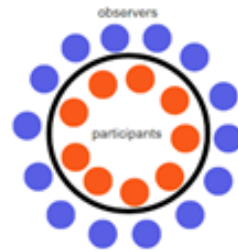
In preparation for the Socratic Seminar, you will need to do the following:

1. Re-read *The Pilgrim's Progress* p. 163-179, paying special attention to all the events that transpire in Vanity Fair. Then, using the prep sheet provided by the tutor, consider the following questions:
 - a. What does Evangelist say about VF?
 - b. How is the town described?
 - c. Who do they meet while in the town?
 - d. What does each character in VF represent – consider both the meaning of their names and their behavior (include those who participate in the trial)?
 - e. How do Christian and Faithful respond during their time there?
 - f. Ultimately, what warnings does Bunyan offer for Christians living in this world (you should have multiple ideas here!).
2. Now go back and re-read the section of "The Celestial Railroad" that discusses Vanity Fair (p. 8-12), addressing:
 - a. How is the town described? How has it changed since Bunyan's time? How is it the same?
 - b. Who do they meet while in the town?
 - c. What does each character in VF represent – consider both the meaning of their names and their behavior?
 - d. How does Hawthorne's traveler respond during his time there?
 - e. Ultimately, what warnings does Hawthorne offer for Christians living in this world (you should have multiple ideas here!). How are Hawthorne's warnings different from Bunyan? How are they the same?
3. Bring both Hawthorne and Bunyan's works to class, along with your prep sheet, on Wednesday, November 17th so that you may refer to them as needed during the discussion. You may also want to bring a Bible to help make your point in the discussion.

Procedure:

On the day of the Socratic seminar, the room will be arranged with an inner and outer circle to promote conversation. You will be assigned a partner. Do not trade names.

As the **participant**, you will sit in the inner circle and confirm or refute the evidence. Each student must participate in the discussion to receive participation points. The **observer** will sit in the outer circle, evaluating your partner's participation through the evaluation form.



The Participants:

- Must support their opinions with evidence from the text
- May speak at any time during the seminar with respect for the other participants
- May refer to other works the class has read if applicable
- May ask relevant questions of other participants

The Coaches:

- Must evaluate the participant's performance during the seminar
- Must provide oral and written feedback to the participant after the seminar
- May not speak to their participants during the seminar
- May not speak to other participants or coaches during the seminar

Rules for the Socratic Seminar:

1. Only one person speaking at a time. No interrupting.
2. Do not monopolize the conversation. If you have made a comment, wait for a couple students to speak before speaking again.
3. Be an active listener. Respond to fellow students by asking follow-up questions or making comments about what you heard.
4. Actively participate. At minimum you must make 4 constructive comments during the discussion (Introduce two points, respond to two points). You may also participate by posing an intriguing question to the group.
5. The Socratic Seminar will have a value of 30 points based on participation.