DISCUSSION GUIDE
The Warmth of Other Suns

1. What did you know about the Great Migration before reading this book? Do you feel it has been underreported? Why do you think so?

2. How were the participants in the Great Migration like migrants, and how were they like immigrants? Do you think those who took part in the movement were more like one group or the other, and why?

3. Which of the causes of the Great Migration discussed by Wilkerson do you think had the most influence on Southern blacks’ decisions to move north?

4. What misconceptions about the Great Migration does Wilkerson dispel?

5. How did preexisting socioeconomic differences among Robert, George, and Ida Mae affect their life in the North? How were their experiences nevertheless similar? What impact did their choice of city have on their experience in the North?

6. How did racism in the North and South differ in the period covered by the book? How would you characterize race relations today? Are there still regional differences? How would you describe them?

7. What do you think changed in the decades covered by the book, in both the North and the South? What has changed in the time since the period covered by the book? What hasn’t changed?

8. Whose story did you connect with most—Robert’s, George’s, Ida Mae’s, or one of the minor characters? What drew you to them?

9. If Robert, George, and Ida Mae were still alive today, what do you think would most surprise them about life in America today? What would make them happiest? What would they be most disappointed or upset about?

10. How do the stories Wilkerson presented compare to the immigration or migration stories of your own family?

11. Which aspects of the history related by Wilkerson did you find most surprising? Most troubling?

12. The Warmth of Other Suns is essentially a story of journeys undertaken in search of a better life and an examination of the circumstances that prompted these journeys. To what extent were Ida Mae’s, George’s, and Robert’s journeys successful? To what extent has America’s journey with respect to race relations been successful? What remains to be done?

13. In which artworks in They Seek A City did you see the strongest parallels to the stories told in The Warmth of Other Suns? Which themes do both the artworks and the book’s narratives share?