

Discussion Questions for  
*Orchard of Hope*  
by Ann H. Gabhart

- One of the underlying themes in *Orchard of Hope* is the need to forgive others who have mistreated you. Why do you think it was so hard for Jocie to forgive Ronnie Martin?
- In *Orchard of Hope* the schools are being integrated for the first time in Holly County. Do you remember when the schools in your area were integrated or if you are too young to remember that time, does it seem impossible to you that schools were ever segregated?
- The first day of high school is a momentous event for most teenagers as it is for Jocie. What made the day special for Jocie and how much did her attitude have to do with that? Do you remember your first day of high school? Was it good or bad?
- Wes feels depressed while he is recuperating from his injury. Do you think Jocie did the right things to help him? Have you ever had to deal with depression in your own life, either your own depression or that of a loved one?
- Zella meddles in Wes's personal life – she says for his own good. Do you think she was right to try to find out about his past? Do you think there is ever a time when a person should meddle in another's private life?
- Jocie receives a gift in *Orchard of Hope* that makes her so happy she cries. Have you ever gotten a gift that meant that much to you?
- Why do you think Leigh's mother is so unhappy about Leigh falling in love? Do you think she will change?
- People don't talk a lot about racism in Hollyhill. Do you think that's because the people had never had to face the issue or that most of them thought there was no problem with racism in their town?
- In *The Scent of Lilacs* Jocie discovers that everybody has a story. Now in *Orchard of Hope* she discovers new stories about the people she knows and loves. What do you think Jocie learns from the stories she hears? How important do you think it is to listen to others' stories? How important is your own story?
- Tabitha has her baby at the end of *Orchard of Hope*. Do you think she will have a hard time as a single mother in the 1960's?
- Do you think a tragic happening in a church brings people together or drives them apart? What do you think it did for Mt. Pleasant Church and why?
- In *Orchard of Hope* the church at Mt Pleasant had a renewing revival experience. Do you think the people's hearts were permanently changed or do you think they fell back into their old behaviors after a few weeks or months?