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## GROUP QUESTIONS

### **Performers**

This story, like many of Hawthorne's works, contains some very dramatic moments. Your job is to perform the final scene from Hawthorne's "Minister's Black Veil." You will need at least three characters (Reverend Mr. Hooper, Reverend Mr. Clark, Narrator). Remember, this is to be a *performance*, not just a reading, which means you'll have to block out movement and make choices with the dialogue (volume, tempo, pauses, etc.). Write down at least three *choices* that you make with the text – things that are the result of your group's interpretation, and not necessarily visible in the text. Be prepared to explain these choices after your performance. You may leave the classroom to rehearse your performance.

### **Artists**

A marketing firm has hired your group to conceptualize and create two posters for an upcoming movie version of "The Minister's Black Veil." The first poster is to appeal to very traditional "literary" audiences, while the second is intended to appeal to younger, mainstream audiences. Carefully consider the power of Hawthorne's symbols, and how you might utilize them, particularly the veil – is it symbolic of a specific sin of Hooper? Or of a more general sin of mankind? How do the themes of the story appeal to both types of audiences? How can you portray these themes visually in a way that will appeal to both types?

### **Psychologists**

Professional psychologists often refer to the five stages of grief (also called the "Kübler-Ross model"): Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance. Briefly explain what these stages are, then find and cite an example of each of these stages as people in the story try to understand the behavior of Mr. Hooper. What, exactly, are the townspeople grieving? List the stages, page numbers of examples, and your conclusion.

### **Poe and the Literary Critics**

Edgar Allan Poe said that meaning of Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil" is that Mr. Hooper has committed a "crime of dark dye" against the woman whose funeral he conducts. Other critics contend that the story exhibits one of Hawthorne's favorite themes, that of the "fortunate fall" ("felix culpa" in Latin), which is the idea that a series of miserable events will lead to a better or happier outcome for others. Find and cite evidence for both points of view, then take a stance (as a group) in this debate, clearly supporting one side. Explain why you think the evidence better supports your point of view.

### **Moralists**

At the beginning, Hawthorne labels the story "A Parable." What is a parable? Write and provide a source for the definition. Compile and cite evidence from the text that both supports and opposes the idea that this story is a parable - including Hawthorne's assertion that the story is taken from a true incident with a Joseph Moody. As a group, come to a conclusion about whether Hawthorne's story is in fact a parable, and if so, what lesson (or lessons) is it teaching?