Discussion Questions for The Help by Kathryn Stockett
(Some questions taken or adapted from http://www.kathrynstockett.com.)

1. Is the book’s title a good one?
2. How does The Help relate to current society?
3. Who was your favorite character? Why?
4. What do you think motivated Hilly? She is terribly cruel to Aibileen and her own help, but she’s a wonderful mother. Do you think that one can be a good mother but, at the same time, a deeply flawed person?
5. Like Hilly, Skeeter’s mother is a prime example of someone deeply flawed yet somewhat sympathetic. She seems to care for Skeeter – and she also seems to have very real feelings for Constantine. Yet the ultimatum she gives to Constantine is indefensible, and most of her interaction with Skeeter is critical. Do you think Skeeter’s mother is a sympathetic or unsympathetic character? Why?
6. How much of a person’s character would you say is shaped by the times in which they live?
7. Did it bother you that Skeeter is willing to overlook so many of Stuart’s faults so that she can get married, and that it’s not until he literally gets up and walks away that the engagement falls apart?
8. Do you believe that Minny was justified in her distrust of white people?
9. Do you think that had Aibileen stayed working for Miss Elizabeth, that Mae Mobley would have grown up to be racist like her mother? Do you think racism is inherent, or taught?
10. From the perspective of a twenty-first century reader, the hairshellac system that Skeeter undergoes seems ludicrous. Yet women still alter their looks in rather peculiar ways as the definition of “beauty” changes with the times. Looking back on your past, what’s the most ridiculous beauty regimen you ever underwent?
11. Do you think there are still vestiges of racism in relationships where people of color work for people who are white? Have you heard stories of parents who put away their valuable jewelry before their nanny comes, trusting the person to look after their child but not their diamond rings?
12. What did you think about Minny’s pie for Miss Hilly? Would you have gone as far as Minny did for revenge?
13. Were there any passages or scenes that you remember well or particularly liked?
14. Has anyone had any experiences that relate to places or experiences in the book?
15. Any comments about the way the book ended?
16. Would you recommend this novel to a friend?
17. Are there any questions you would like to ask?