NAME:

Discussion Questions for *Hidden Figures*

DIRECTIONS: Answer FOUR of the following questions.

1. What parts of the movie do you remember most, and why?
2. Symbols are often used to make significant points in a film. How do the following repeated symbols help to tell the story?

• Coffee:

° The placement of an extra coffee pot in Katherine’s work area

° Katherine’s reaction to the coffee pot

° Stafford’s offering her a cup of coffee at the end of the film

• The restroom

° The existence of a “colored” restroom in another building a

half mile away

° Katherine’s need to run the distance

° removal of the sign by Al Harrison (played by Kevin Costner)

• The pearls

° The dress code for women at NASA

° Katherine’s outburst when she says she can’t afford pearls

° The gift of a pearl necklace from Katherine’s co-workers

1. When did you notice other people standing up for Dorothy, Katherine, and Mary? Why was it important for them to have male allies (supporters) and white allies?
2. How do the protests and marches of civil rights activists occurring elsewhere in the South, and the corresponding segregationist response, influence the lives of the women at Langley and their families?
3. Mr. Stafford, the engineer, repeatedly has Mary Jackson remove her name from reports and tells her “Computers don’t author reports.” Why was he unwilling to let her share the byline? Should her name have been on the reports? Why, or why not?
4. What would you do if you were told you could not pursue a career or job because of how you look or who you are?
5. On a webpage about Katherine Johnson in STEM,

[https:// www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/a-lifetime-of-stem.html](https://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/a-lifetime-of-stem.html)

NASA suggests some lessons to learn from her life:

*• Love learning.*

*• Follow your passion.*

*• Accept the help you’re given, and help others when you can.*

*• Follow new leads and don’t give up. Keep trying.*

*• Go beyond the task at hand; ask questions; be inquisitive. Let yourself be heard.*

*• Do what you love, and love what you do.*

*• You are as good as anyone in this town, but you are no better than any of them.*

What are three ways that you could apply these lessons to your own life right now?