



Teaching Three Great Books

with Dr. Flora Armetta

Lesson 12: Great Expectations – Part 3

Outline:

Ideas about different ways to address themes and problems that are raised by Dickens in *Great Expectations*

- Ask the students how the tone of the first person narrative compares to that in Twain's or Bronte's. Why is Jane telling her story? Ask students to choose their words carefully and defend their choices.
- Examine a similar tone between St. Augustine's writing and *Great Expectations*.
 - Ask students whether they can see parallels between Augustine speaking to God and Pip's way of showing the readers his two selves (the little boy and the adult self).
 - If Pip is confessing, what is he confessing?
 - Pip is becoming a reckless witness under torture. His lies are further incriminating him.
 - There is an advocacy of some sense of original sin and the idea that someone will always have to pay for sins. The novel offers a sense of guilt and redemption, which is beautifully Christian.
- Take a phrasing or an image and chase it.
- What kinds of qualities, good and bad, do children inherit from their parents or parent figures?
- How does Dicken's use food and drink in *Great Expectations* to indicate character?
- Another point of entry is allusion in the novel. What else does this handwashing remind you of?
- Is there a hero of this novel? If so, who is it and why? What are the values would we expect in a hero? How do those values play out in the story?
- Analyze some of the names in *Great Expectations*. How is Estella comparable to a star?
- What if anything has Pip learned?