

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Activity 2 - Examining Community in *Beloved*

Directions: Read each passage from *Beloved* and complete the accompanying activity.

Life at Sweet Home

“And they beat. The women for having known them and no more, no more; the children for having been them but never again. They killed a boss so often and so completely they had to bring him back to life to pump him one more time. Tasting hot mealcake among pine trees, they beat it away. Singing love songs to Mr. Death, they smashed his head. More than the rest, they killed the flirt whom folks called Life for leading them on. Making them think the next sunrise would be worth it; that another stroke of time would do it at last. Only when she was dead would they be safe. The successful ones—the ones who had been there enough years to have maimed,

mutilated, maybe even buried her—kept watch over the others who were still in her cock-teasing hug, caring and looking forward, remembering and looking back. They were the ones whose eyes said, "Help me, 's bad"; or "Look out," meaning *this might be the day I bay or eat my own mess or run*, and it was this last that had to be guarded against, for if one pitched and ran—all, all forty-six, would be yanked by the chain that bound them and no telling who or how many would be killed. A man could risk his own life, but not his brother's. So the eyes said, "Steady now," and 'Hang by me.'”

Page 54 in the online text

How do the slaves at Sweet Home support each other? Then, use 5 words to describe the community they built at Sweet Home.

5 Words:

Baby Suggs' Congregation

Watch this movie clip that shows Baby Suggs preaching to her congregation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=om4c8bALiec>

- How did Baby Suggs create this community and why is it important symbolically?

- How does this community find the positive following tragedy?

Carnival and Family

“Paul D made a few acquaintances; spoke to them about what work he might find. Sethe returned the smiles she got. Denver was swaying with delight. And on the way home, although leading them now, the shadows of three people still held hands.” Page 24 in the online text.

- How does a family function as a community?

124 Bluestone Road and the Community

Read the following passage about Baby Sugg’s throwing an impromptu party. Afterwards, consider how Sethe and her family were treated differently before and after Beloved’s death.

“From Denver’s two thrilled eyes it grew to a feast for ninety people. 124 shook with their voices far into the night. Ninety people who ate so well, and laughed so much, it made them angry. They woke up the next morning and remembered the meal-fried perch that Stamp Paid handled with a hickory twig, holding his left palm out against the spit and pop of the boiling grease; the corn pudding made with cream; tired, overfed children asleep in the grass, tiny bones of roasted rabbit still in their

hands—and got angry. Baby Suggs’ three (maybe four) pies grew to ten (maybe twelve). Sethe’s two hens became five turkeys. The one block of ice brought all the way from Cincinnati—over which they poured mashed watermelon mixed with sugar and mint to make a punch—became a wagonload of ice cakes for a washtub full of strawberry shrug. 124, rocking with laughter, goodwill and food for ninety, made them angry.

Page 68 in the online text

Community Relationship Before Beloved’s Death	Community Relationship After Beloved’s Death