

## **Painted Hives**

### **Slovenia Discussion Questions**

1. What locations and landmarks did you recognize in Painted Hives? What images, memories, or family stories do you associate with them? How do these locations and landmarks connect to Slovenian heritage?
2. The book describes Slovenia as a “magical place” where Wilber has an “Aha! moment”. In what ways is Slovenia a “magical place” in your mind? What “Aha! moments” have you had with regard to Slovenia?
3. Do you have any Slovenian ancestors/relatives who were/are beekeepers? If so, what do you know about their beekeeping? Do you feel a connection to beekeeping through your Slovenian roots? What do you think is different about beekeeping in Slovenia versus other places in the world?
4. How does the Slovenia of today, the one you read about in the book, compare with the Yugoslavia you have heard about from family members? What do you think of and feel when you imagine your grandparents or great-grandparents in Slovenia?
5. Have you personally visited Slovenia? If so, how did you feel when you were there, and what are some of your favorite places and experiences? If not, what would you like to experience if you were to visit Slovenia?
6. The generosity and graciousness of Slovenians is legendary. How have you or your family experienced this generosity?
7. What was your reaction to the Slovenian cuisine Wilber had? Were you surprised he opted for pizza and cheese toast rather than goulash and potica?
8. A few of the characters in the book come different ethnic backgrounds. How is Slovenia a “melting pot” because of its location?
9. The Slovenian language is notoriously difficult to learn. What words or phrases were passed on to you from family members? What do you remember about trying to learn the language?
10. Why did your ancestors leave Slovenia? What stories/thoughts/emotions does this bring about?
11. What do you want your non-Slovenian friends to know about Slovenia?