

Guide to The 39 Clues Book 10: Into the Gauntlet by Margaret Peterson Haddix

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Theme: Exploring the Power of Working Together

What the Book Is About

Throughout the hunt for the 39 Clues, Amy and Dan Cahill have uncovered history's greatest mysteries and their family's deadliest secrets. But are they ready to face the truth about the Cahills and the key to their unmatched power? After a whirlwind race that's taken them across five continents, Amy and Dan face the most difficult challenge yet — a task no Cahill dared to imagine. When faced with a choice that could change the future of the world, can two kids succeed where 500 years worth of famous ancestors failed?

About the Author

Margaret Peterson Haddix is the author of many memorable novels for young readers, including *Takeoffs and Landings*, *The Girl with 500 Middle Names*, *Turnabout*, and *Running Out of Time*. *Among the Betrayed* is the third book in a sequence that includes *Among the Hidden* and *Among the Impostors*. Her work has been honored with the International Reading Association Children's Book Award, the American Library Association Best Books for Young Adults and Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers citations, and state readers' choice lists in sixteen states. Haddix graduated from Miami University.

What Is Power?

As Dan and Amy race to find the final clue, they have not only overcome challenging obstacles, faced death, and solved insurmountable problems but they have also forged new friendships and learned that sometimes power isn't always what it seems. Help your class discover the power of working together, building friendships and trusting one another just like the Cahill Family discovers in this final installment of the series!

39 Acts of Kindness

"No kind action ever stops with itself. One kind action leads to another. Good example is followed. A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees. The greatest work that kindness does to others is that it makes them kind themselves." —Amelia Earhart (1897-1937); Aviation pioneer and member of the Cahill Family

The characters in the 39 Clues series all grow as they learn that kindness and forgiveness are more powerful and influential than discord. Help your class discover how powerful kindness can be by implementing a 39 Acts of Kindness program.

Procedure

Discuss and define with the class what qualifies as a random act of kindness. For instance, picking up your own room is a good thing, but picking up a sibling's room is a random act of kindness.

Brainstorm with your class some ideas they could do like helping an elderly neighbor by mowing their grass, letting someone go in front of you in a long line, or sharing a treat with someone having a bad day. Create a class goal: will they each try to do 39 random acts alone or as a class? Perhaps it could last for 39 days! Encourage the students to think of looking for random ways to be kind as its own type of clue hunt! Each day, ask the children share what they have done and post the random acts on a bulletin board or chart.

The Power of Forgiveness

"Lord, what fools these mortals be!" — William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*

Amy and Dan find that the power of forgiveness lies in the decision to forgive. Forgiveness is one of the most compassionate and powerful things a person can do. Teach your class this compelling skill through journaling. Using their investigation journal, have students reflect upon a situation when they have hurt someone's feeling or acted in a way that was not kind. Next, have them think about why they acted in that way. Did they act that way because they were tired, hungry, feeling jealous or stressed? Allow students to share with one another so they can learn that sometimes people act out in ways that they don't mean.

Next, have students think of an experience where someone hurt their feelings or acted meanly toward them. Based upon the above reflection, why do they think that person acted in that way? For instance, maybe their best friend said something hurtful. Was it because they were worried about a sick pet? Perhaps they just failed a test. Discuss how feeling angry toward them feels and how they might go about resolving the conflict? How does reconciliation feel versus harboring anger?

Uncover Happiness: Write a Gratitude Letter

Dan and Amy had many people who helped them as they traveled the world searching for clues. From the helicopter pilot who flew them to the Madrigal stronghold to the family who was the caretaker of Shakespeare's tomb and Madrigal clue. The kindness of individuals who have made a difference in someone's life deserves to be recognized!

Writing a gratitude letter to someone who has impacted or changed their life can be powerful. Not only will it bring joy to the person who receives it but it will fill the heart of the sender to.

The Power of Working Together: Team-Building Activities

The Madrigals knew that the one way to help reconcile the family was to force the branches to work together. Teach your students the power of teamwork through these team building activities.

Madrigal Stick

Participants: Groups of 4 to 8

Materials: a long, thin, lightweight rod

Procedure: Ask participants to point their index fingers and hold their arms out. Lay the stick down on their fingers. Get the group to adjust their finger heights until the stick is horizontal and everyone's index fingers

are touching it. Challenge the group to lower the stick to the ground but the stick can only rest on the top of their fingers.

The catch: Each person's fingers must be in contact with the Madrigal Stick at all times. Pinching or grabbing the pole is not allowed, it must rest on top of fingers. The group that lowers the Madrigal stick to the ground first wins the challenge.

Gauntlet Challenge

Teach trust through this fun activity that challenges students to rely on their partner's power to help them to succeed.

Participants: 2 students per group

Materials: Cones or other obstacles, blindfold, timer

Procedure: Create an obstacle course using cones or other items. One student will be blindfolded while the other will help them through the gauntlet using only verbal commands. They may not have physical contact with their partner. Points should be deducted for each cone or item the participant comes in contact with. The team with the fastest time through the gauntlet wins!