

## **ACTIVITIES FOR KATHY STINSON'S BOOKS FOR MIDDLE READERS**

**MARIE-CLAIRE 1: DARK SPRING,  
MARIE-CLAIRE 2: A SEASON OF SORROW,  
MARIE-CLAIRE 3: VISITORS, and  
MARIE-CLAIRE 4: ANGELS IN WINTER**

Offer to read the books to some women at a senior's residence in your community. You may want to spread your reading over a few or several visits. On the day of your last visit, invite the women to talk about when they were girls. Ask how things were different from, and the same as, both now and when Marie-Claire was a girl.

Write a letter to Marie-Claire. Tell her what surprised you most about life in Montreal in 1885 as you read her story. Invite her to come (if she could) to visit you where you live. Mention what aspects of your home and community you think would surprise her most. (Since there's no way (is there?) to send mail back in time, send your letter to [kathy@kathystinson.com](mailto:kathy@kathystinson.com) instead. She may have a way of getting Marie-Claire to answer your letter.

If you have read all 4 books about Marie-Claire, you might have an idea of what might happen in Book 5 - if there were to be one. Penguin says there won't be, but why not write your own version of Marie-Claire 5! Will Marie-Claire and Lucille get into mischief together somehow? Or will they have another argument? Will Louis ask Céleste to marry him? Will Tante Térése and Oncle Henri visit Montreal again with their Baby Angélique? Or will Marie-Claire perhaps take a train to visit her aunt and uncle in Toronto? What do you think is in store for Marie-Claire in the new year, 1886? Have fun continuing Marie-Claire's story!

For more activities related to the Marie-Claire books, and others in the 'Our Canadian Girl' series, visit [www.ourcanadiangirl.ca](http://www.ourcanadiangirl.ca).

## **KING OF THE CASTLE**

Near the end of the school year, organize a party for all the people in the school who can read. Be sure to invite those just starting to learn, too, and those who may learn next year. Make it a book party, like the one being planned for Mr. Elliot, or think up another way to celebrate reading at your party. Just be sure to make it's a party "fit for a king". (And don't forget to invite the school caretaker(s).)

Mr. Elliot came across several books at Jessie Lucas Public School that interested him, both before he could read and after. Imagine that Mr. Elliot is the caretaker at your school. Make a display of books that people in your class would like to recommend to him -- either for himself, or to read with Jason and Jemma. Include a little note with each book explaining why you think he'd enjoy it.

## **SEVEN CLUES**

Think of someone you'd like to make a treasure hunt for, and what kind of treasure they would like to find. (A book maybe, or maybe a game to play, something to eat, or something else you could make for them.) Pick six good hiding places for the treasure, and hide it in the best one. Write clues like those Matt and David found on the way to finding their treasure, to lead your treasure-hunter from place to place, ending of course with the one where the treasure is hidden. Don't forget the postcard clue, to get the whole treasure hunt started.

## **THE GREAT BIKE RACE**

Who is the person in your school or neighbourhood that you think is the least likely person for you to become friends with? (It might be someone your age, or someone much younger, or much older.) Write a story in which you - somehow - become friends? What brings you together? How does this person surprise you when you get to know him/her better than you do now? How do your old friends feel about your new friendship?

## **ONE MORE CLUE**

Have you ever had to try to communicate with someone whose language is not the same as yours? How did it go? Did mistakes in understanding lead to any funny moments or to any hurt feelings? Can you write a story based on misunderstandings you had, or might have had?

If you'd like to read more about some people whose first languages are not the same, check out Books 3 and 4 in the Marie-Claire series.

Visit [www.kathystinson.com](http://www.kathystinson.com) for more information about Kathy Stinson and her books for young people, or to find out how you can arrange a school or library reading, writing workshop for children or adults, or conference presentation!