Chatterbooks Activity Pack

The Chocolate Box Girls

The Chocolate Box Girls – by Cathy Cassidy

Reading and activity ideas for your Chatterbooks group
About this pack

Here is a special Chatterbooks pack for your groups, all about Cathy Cassidy’s series *The Chocolate Box Girls* and with the spotlight on *Sweet Honey*, the latest book in this fab series.

In this pack you’ll find lots of information about the books, about Cathy Cassidy, and about the Chocolate Box girls themselves. There are links to Cathy’s website and to video blogs, book trailers, fun surveys, and Cathy reading from her books.

And there are some great activities for your group to enjoy, plus ideas for discussion topics, details of more books by Cathy, and suggestions for more books to read about sisters, best friends – and chocolate!

The pack is brought to you by The Reading Agency and their publisher partnership Children’s Reading Partners

**Chatterbooks** [www.readinggroups.org/chatterbooks](http://www.readinggroups.org/chatterbooks) is a reading group programme for children aged 4 to 14 years. It is coordinated by The Reading Agency and its patron is author Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Chatterbooks groups run in libraries and schools, supporting and inspiring children’s literacy development by encouraging them to have a really good time reading and talking about books.

**The Reading Agency** is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more through programmes for adults, young people and Children – including the Summer Reading Challenge, and Chatterbooks. See [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

**Children’s Reading Partners** is a national partnership of children’s publishers and libraries working together to bring reading promotions and author events to as many children and young people as possible.

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For help in planning your Chatterbooks meeting, have a look at these [Top Tips for a Successful Session](#).
Cathy Cassidy

I was born in 1962 in Coventry (scarily ancient, I know). I wrote my first picture book for my little brother when I was eight or nine. I loved making comics, too - pages and pages of picture stories, features and competitions. I'd sell my homemade comic to a friend for 5p, then claim it back and sell it again to someone else, they didn't have photocopiers back then!

I went to Art College in Liverpool, then got a job as fiction editor on the fab and legendary Jackie magazine. Later, I married my boyfriend Liam, went back to college and trained to be an art teacher. I taught in a Coventry secondary school for a few years, which I loved, then moved to Scotland with Liam to start a family. For 12 years I was the agony aunt for teen mag Shout, as well as teaching art in several local primary schools, but these days the books take up pretty much all of my time and attention.

My kids are almost grown up now, and after many years living in the beautiful Galloway hills in Scotland, we now live on Merseyside in a cool Victorian house that looks out over a park. When I look out of my writing room window I can see swans and geese on the lake... awww!

I've been veggie for over 30 years, and was vegan for 8 of them - a chocolate-eating vegan, like Storm! Recently I've gone vegan again... yikes! I love old clothes, old toys, cars, books. We have two dogs called Kelpie & Finn and a cat called Pepper. I love my family, I love my home and I love my work. Of all my jobs, writing has to be the best - it's the perfect excuse to daydream, after all!

Have a look at Cathy's website at www.cathycassidy.com – it's full of information about Cathy and her books, with news, competitions, and groovy downloads. And join in on Cathy’s Dreamcatcher blog.

All about The Chocolate Box Girls

This is a series all about five sisters, part of a brand-new stepfamily where the parents have a chocolate business. There are five books, each one told from the viewpoint of a different sister. The sisters are:

Honey Tanberry - 15 years old
Skye Tanberry - 13 years old
Summer Tanberry - 13 years old, Skye’s identical twin
Coco Tanberry - 12 years old
Cherry Costello - 14 years old, and stepsister to the Tanberry girls.

In each book you’ll find a totally absorbing story about each of the sisters, plus fact files with details about their characters, looks, style, loves, prize possessions – and dreams. There is also a quiz to see ‘Which Chocolate Box Girl Are You?’ – and some yummy recipes, like ‘Rocking Rocky Road’ and ‘Cherry and Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Sauce’!
**Cherry Crush** 978-0141325224 pbk

Cherry Costello’s life is about to change forever. She and Dad are moving to Somerset where a new mum and a bunch of brand-new sisters await. And on Cherry’s first day there she meets Shay Fletcher - the kind of boy who should carry a government health warning. But Shay already has a girlfriend, Cherry’s new stepsister, Honey. Cherry knows her friendship with Shay is dangerous - it could destroy everything. But that doesn’t mean she’s going to stay away from him...

**Marshmallow Skye** 978-0141325248 pbk

Skye and Summer Tanberry are identical twins, and Skye loves her sister Summer more than anyone else in the world. They do everything together, but lately Skye’s been feeling like second-best - it’s the story of her life. And when her friend Alfie confesses he’s fallen not for her, but for Summer, it hurts. Skye wants to be her own person, but with an effortlessly cool twin, how can she? Will Skye ever step out of Summer’s shadow and find her own chance to shine?

**Summer’s Dream** 978-0141345888 pbk

Summer has always dreamed of dancing, and when a place at ballet school comes up, she wants it so badly it hurts. Middle school ends and the holidays begin, but unlike her sisters, Summer has no time for lazy days and sunny beach parties. The audition becomes her obsession, and things start spiralling out of control... The more Summer tries to find perfection, the more lost she becomes. Will she realise - with the help of the boy who wants more than friendship - that dreams come in all shapes and sizes?

**Coco Caramel** 978-0141341590 pbk

Coco is the youngest of the Tanberry sisters but she’s as headstrong as any of them. Coco is crazy about animals and loves her riding lessons. When Caramel, her favourite pony at the stables, is sold, Coco scopes out the new owner - and she’s not happy about what she discovers. With big sister Honey going off at the deep end and Summer only just recovering from her eating disorder, there’s no-one at Tanglewood to help Coco out. Can Coco save Caramel alone - or will a new friend help her?
And now the latest book in this delicious series! –

**Sweet Honey** 978-0141341569 hbk

Honey is going to live with her dad in Australia. Determined to make a fresh start, she couldn't be further away from the tough times at Tanglewood. Her new life is a dream come true - until school begins. The girls are different from Honey's friends in England and the only person who seems to understand her is the cute boy from the beach she's chatting to online. But when he, the girls at school and even her dad start breaking promises, who can she trust? All alone on the other side of the world, Honey's past is about to catch up with her . . .

**HONEY TANBERRY is…**

... a drama queen: moody, selfish, often sad...but also bright, charming, organised and sweet. She’s 14 years old.

**Born:** London

**Mum:** Charlotte

**Dad:** Greg

**Looks:** long blonde hair (now growing again after she cut it short); blue eyes; creamy skin; tall; slim

**Style:** cool: little print dresses, strappy sandals, shades, shorts and T-shirts

**Loves:** drawing, painting, fashion, music .... there was also Shay Fletcher, but look out now for Ash

**Prize possessions:** diary, sketchbook, turret bedroom – and a silver honey bee charm

**Dreams:** of being a model, actress or fashion designer
Ideas for your Chatterbooks sessions

Things to talk about
Get together a collection of Cathy Cassidy books – as well as *The Chocolate Box Girls* there are many other titles, including the *Daizy Star* series for younger readers. Add in titles by other authors about sisters, friendship, and growing up and having dreams, so that you’ve got lots to refer to, and plenty of reading for your group to share.

Social networking: In *Sweet Honey* Honey gets caught up in scary issues around chatting online, and networking and blogging on SpiderWeb (a site like Facebook). What sites do your Chatterbooks group members use? Talk about safe use of the internet. *Have a look at Cathy’s top ten tips for staying safe online.*

Modern communications: Honey is in Australia and her mother and sisters are in England but they can communicate immediately almost all the time through phone and Internet, including face to face chat on Skype. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of this? Go back in time 30 years and imagine what it would be like to have no mobile phones and no Internet!

Growing up: *We laugh and chew gum and touch up our lipgloss in the corridor between classes, but I wonder how many of us wish we could be nine again, go back to simpler times...Sometimes I think being a teenager is an act, a role we have to take in a play where nobody bothered to show us the script.* (From Summer’s Dream p78) What does your group think about what Summer says here?

Christmas: *I have sung carols in the snow a few times, risking frostbite in fingerless mittens as I clutched the songbook, but I have never before dodged heatstroke while singing ‘Little Donkey’. (From Sweet Honey p188)* Honey spends Christmas in Australia with her dad – she finds it a strange experience, and misses her family and the things they usually do, such as the village carol concert, putting out mince pies for Santa, or watching the film ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’. If you were spending Christmas in a warm country the other side of the world, what would you enjoy? And what would you miss?
Activity ideas
WARM UPS

Reading – sweet, sweet reading!
Get your group to describe their reading in terms of their favourite sweets or chocolates. Here are a few suggestions to get them going:

- My reading is like a Fry’s Turkish delight...I like to savour every last bit...slowly....slowly.
- My reading is like chewing gum...anytime, anywhere....
- My reading is a gob stopper...it shuts me up!

Chocolate Box Girls Wordsearch

SPIDER WEB SUMMER AUSTRALIA CHERRY
SOMERSET COCO HACKING LIFEGUARD
SKYE SKYPE HONEY CHOCOLATE

Look for the words across, down, diagonally, upside-down, and from right to left. The answers are at the end of this pack.
LONGER ACTIVITIES
Draw the Chocolate Box Girls!

Using the fact files in the books about the Chocolate Box Girls, choose one of the girls and draw a picture of her, based on the facts given. Then choose a book which you think she would enjoy reading – maybe one of your fave titles at the moment.

You can use the frame below for your picture.

This is Chocolate Box Girl ......................................................

The book I would choose for her to read is ..........................................................
**Fact file with your BF or your sister!**
Using the Chocolate Box fact file format, write a description of yourself, and then one about your sister, or your best friend.
Share with each other what you’ve written and compare the descriptions of yourselves – does she say the same about you as you’ve said about yourself? Or is it different?!

**FACT FILE FORMAT**

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<td>Prize possessions:</td>
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<td>Dreams:</td>
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**Design a chocolate**
Create your own special chocolate!
Think about:
- Dark or milk chocolate
- Shape and size
- Any patterning
- Decoration
- What’s inside! – soft, crunchy or chewy? Sweet or sharp? Fruity – or something else?
- Name – eg. ‘Coco Caramel’, ‘Sweet Honey’

**Storybook cupcakes**
Have a competition to ice a cupcake so that it represents a book title, or a storybook character – eg. a design with a wizard’s hat – or a lightning zig-zag – could be Harry Potter; a honey pot design could be Winnie the Pooh. Vote for the one that people like best.  
**And have a look at this great Chocolate Icing tutorial on CCTV!**

**Book covers**
Talk about the book covers for the *Chocolate Box Girls* series.
- Do you like them? Why/why not?
- Which is your favourite?
- What does the design, colours and images on the cover tell you about what the book might be like inside?
- Imagine you are a Chocolate Box girl – think of a title for a book about you, and then design a cover around your title.

**Watch this video with Cathy’s book cover designer Sara.**

**Life is what happens......**
Talk about the way Honey describes what happens to her, and how she writes about what she thinks and feels.
Get your group to have a go at writing an email/Spiderweb message to a sister or a friend, in a similar style, about a good day in your life – or a day when everything went wrong......
Talk with an author
The internet is a great way to get in touch with an author.
Your favourite author probably has a website with a contact address for emailing them directly. Look out for special author web chats arranged by publishers – and it may be possible to arrange a live Skype meeting with an author, either directly with the author, or through their publisher.
For more information about how you might set this up, contact andrea.reece@readingagency.org.uk

And to talk with Cathy - her email address is mailcathycassidy@googlemail.com

More books by Cathy Cassidy – all published by Puffin

<table>
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<th>Book</th>
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Cathy Cassidy ebook shorts – only 99p each!

And see Letters to Cathy (978-0141328942 pbk):
There are no questions Cathy hasn't been asked and isn't afraid to answer, from growing-up to dating, making friends, following your dreams and much more. Through the happy times, the mad and crazy times and the days when you simply find yourself asking 'Why? '- whatever's bugging you, Cathy can help . . .
More books about sisters, best friends – and chocolate!
And take a look at our **Chatterbooks Best Friends Forever** pack!

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<th><strong>Sisters</strong></th>
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Wordsearch Answers

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Q E T S P I D E R W E B Y I P L
C B M U Q M N H C V Z A S F J G
X A S M F H K A L P T E W A D F
W R U M P L K C J G D A Z C B M
Q E R E Y I S K Y P E P L J G D
S A Z R C B O I M Q E T U O L Y
J G D A L Z M N C B M W C R E Y
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