

---

# *Betsy-Tacy Reading Guide*



---

## **READING SKILLS & STRATEGIES**

Decision-Making  
Problem-Solving  
Comparison  
Contrast  
Descriptive Language  
Writing About Life  
Summarizing  
Drawing Conclusions  
Making Inferences

---

## **THEMES**

Friendship  
Family  
Love  
Faith  
Growing Up  
Morality/Standards  
Facing Problems  
Responsibility  
Memories

---

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS**

World History: Historical Events & People  
Art  
Music: Popular and Classical  
Foreign Language: French, German, Latin  
Writing  
Literature and Poetry  
Basic Philosophical Ideas

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

The world in which Betsy Ray and her friends grew up differed greatly from the world as we know it today. The stories begin just before the turn of the (20th) century and are set in the Minnesota town of Mankato (Deep Valley). Author Maud Hart Lovelace (Betsy Ray) and her friends Bick Kenney (Tacy Kelly) and Midge Gerlach (Tib Muller) form the center of the stories, which began as bedtime amusements for Maud's daughter Merian and evolved into the popular series of ten books.

Loosely autobiographical, the novels trace the friendship that began between Betsy and Tacy and soon expanded to include Tib and, later, a host of other girls and boys. The characters grew from childhood into young adulthood, from a trio of best friends into a fun-loving high school Crowd, from the innocence of children into the complex situations of the grown-up world. As their world widens and grows more challenging, so do the characters' personalities emerge and mature.

Written in 1940-1955, these books have proved to be timeless. Themes of family, friendship faith, love, and the need for standards in life show us how these ideas shaped our past, influence our present, and hold promise for our future. This guide is intended to stimulate discussions and activities relating to these delightful stories.



©2009 Betsy-Tacy Society