



How to  
Talk About  
**True Beauty,**  
**Cool Fashion,**  
and **...Modesty!**

DANNAH GRESH



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
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## 8 GREAT DATES FOR MOMS AND DAUGHTERS

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*To my mother, Kay Barker,  
who told me the teacup story and taught me to live it.  
Thank you for praying this verse over my life.*

*“Look...and be utterly amazed. For I am going to  
do something in your days  
that you would not believe,  
even if you were told.”*

*—HABAKKUK 1:5*

## Acknowledgments

*A Big SKG Squeeze to...*

*Over 140,000 moms and daughters who have been through these dates in the book Secret Keeper Girl: 8 Great Dates for You and Your Daughter, where they first appeared.* I've loved getting to know my Secret Keeper Girls and their "connecting moms" through Facebook and my secretkeepergirl.com blog. I love you, girls! Thanks for getting Secret Keeper Girl rolling. We had no idea how big it would become!

*Harvest House Publishers for partnering with us for the exciting growth of Secret Keeper Girl.* I am so grateful that you see my heart to protect little girls in a culture that's pressing them to grow up way too fast. Thank you for re-releasing this, the original Secret Keeper Girl product, and for having the vision to encourage me to write *Six Ways to Keep the "Little" in Your Girl: Guiding Your Daughter from Her Tweens to Her Teens*. I'm especially grateful to Terry Glaspey for steering the partnership. Bob Hawkins Jr. and LaRae Weikert were especially generous with their time as we built the vision. Carolyn McCready invested no small amount of patience and expertise as a loving editor. Paul Gosard brought all the details together. I'm humbled to work with such veterans in the publishing industry!

*Dr. James Dobson for recommending this, the original Secret Keeper Girl product, in your much-anticipated book Bringing Up Girls!* Your encouragement means a great deal and will expand this message greatly!

*While I'm at the task of squeezing, I'm so grateful for my main squeeze, Bob.* Secret Keeper Girl was his idea, and he has been faithful. From our great beginning with Moody Publishers through Greg Thornton's leadership to our expanding our partnerships, Bob has married administrative genius with patience.

*Mostly, thanks to Jesus, who I long to be with every day.* I am forever in His Great Love.

—Dannah



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Hi, Friend—

In your hand is one of the easiest-to-use resources you'll ever find. Let me give you a few key pointers about how to find things in this book. (In just a few pages, I'll explain how to use it and how to plan your mom–daughter dates.) But here's a quick look at what you'll see inside.

**Part 1: Getting to Know Each Other.** This is a hearty “hello” and “welcome” to Secret Keeper Girl. The first two chapters contain some self-reflection on our own quest for true beauty and modesty as moms, and then a dose of truth about the culture your daughter is growing up in. Skim them if you want, but don't skip the third chapter. It tells you how to use the book!

**Part 2: 8 Great Dates.** Here they are in all their glory—the Secret Keeper Girl 8 Great Dates, which teach your daughter about true beauty and modesty! Glance through them and you'll see that each one is easy to use...and very fun. (What mom wouldn't want to share a facial with her daughter?)

**Part 3: Devotions and Other Good Stuff.** This section is full of things you'll reference as needed. Don't worry—I'll let you know when you need to dive in. The first part is the Secret Keeper Girl

Devotions. You'll use these fantastic daily devotions after Date #3, and I'll explain how to use them. The next section contains some frequently asked questions. I added this as moms wrote in with their most perplexing problems about true beauty and modesty. (I even tackled swimsuits!) Finally, you'll find the Girl Gab pull-outs for your daughter. These are identical to the Girl Gab pages you'll find in part 2—8 Great Dates. They're perforated so you can pull them out and give them to your daughter.

Enjoy!

*Dannah*

Part 1



# Getting to Know Each Other



# A Mother's Seasons of Emotion

Well, here you are.

A woman.

A mother.

How do you feel today?

Beautiful or boring?

Well-groomed or well-worn?

Are your kids ready to name you Nag of the Universe because it's "that time of the month"? Or is your husband ready to name ovulation a national holiday because it's that time of the month?

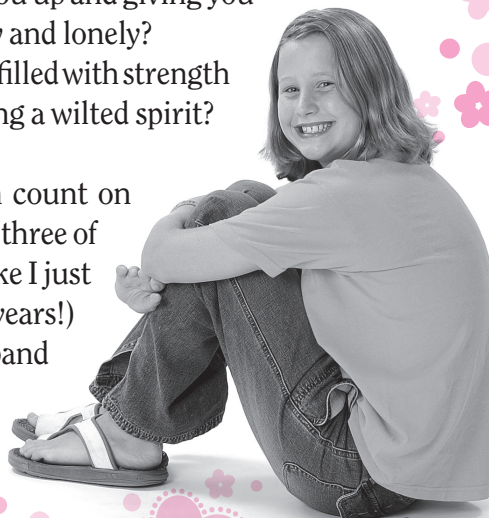
Are you feeling flabby and overweight? Or tan and toned?

Are your friendships building you up and giving you courage? Or have they left you raw and lonely?

Is your heart in a good place and filled with strength and confidence? Or are you carrying a wilted spirit?

Me?

My brain is mush today. I can count on these days, every month. There are three of them. I'm extra tired. I'm thirsty like I just ran a mile. (Believe me, it's been years!) I have a dull headache. To my husband and kids I *am* a dull headache!



I feel a little lonely. I'm weepy. And my brain...what was I just thinking...yes, pure mush!

But catch up with me in a few days—I'll be back on top of the game again. Energetic! Confident! Thinking a mile a minute even if I couldn't run one if my life depended on it. Enjoying my fabulous family.

Can you identify?

We women certainly are...well, I've heard it termed "emotionally wealthy"! I like to think of it as little seasons of emotional change.

Sometimes it's a mini-season like a day or two of a hormonal shower. Sometimes it's an extra-long winter that just won't warm up—brought on by the loss of a family member, the loss of a job, the rebellion of a child or the sickness of a spouse, the death of a dream, the judgment of a friend.

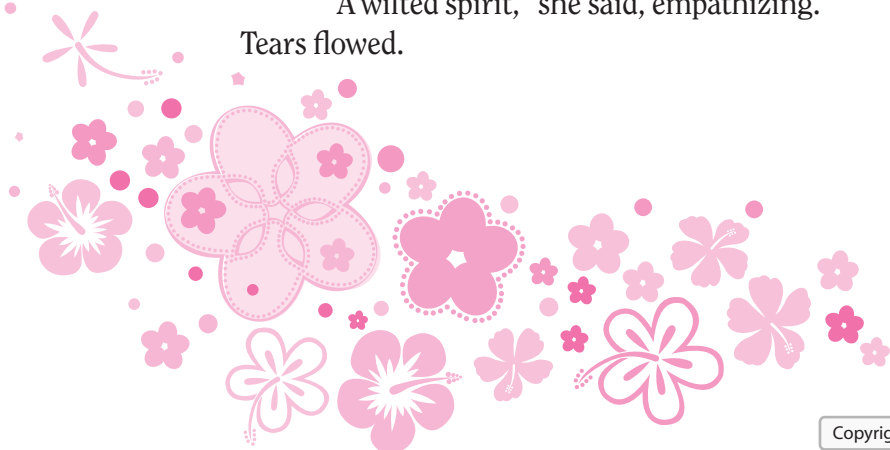
I had one of those long winters last year. Loneliness. Rejection. Numbness. Tears. A loss of direction.

During that long winter of growth my friend visited.

"What do you sense in me?" I asked, wondering if I was as bad off as I felt.

"A wilted spirit," she said, empathizing.

Tears flowed.





I felt pretty wilted.

She prayed specifically for God to water my soul. Funny thing—He did! The next morning I just happened to read Isaiah 55. (I'd been making my way through that particular book of the Bible.)

*“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters...As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace.”*

*Isaiah 55:1,10-12*

The watering began.

Three days later, as I completed my Bible-study homework, that beautiful passage was reintroduced to me with a new freshness...from God the author's perspective. “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters.”

I came.

The watering continued.

Oh, the fresh outpouring of God's Spirit during those seasons of emotions!



Can you identify? Have you found the fresh outpouring of His Spirit during those short mini-seasons like bad-hair days and PMS? Have you felt it overwhelm you like an ocean during those long winters of emotional pain?

Again and again, have you returned to the Word of God to find

that it has the power and authority to arrest your unhealthy emotions and replace them with His truth about your value...your beauty...your purpose?

You may have picked up this cute little book with the intent of helping your daughter, but I'm praying that it would renew you and me too. That it would bring us back to the simplicity of soothing our emotions in Him as we train our sweet girls for the seasons ahead.

Won't you return to Him right now?

Bring the wilted parts of your heart to Jesus and ask Him to water them?

Just stop for a moment and ask the precious Holy Spirit to make you a well-watered place of refreshment before you go any further. After all, how can we bring that refreshment to our daughters if we've not first found it ourselves?



*“Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters.”*

*Isaiah 55:1*

# Your Daughter's Endless Season of Emotions: The Tween and Teen Years

**V**itamins and herbs.

Lots of water.

A diet emphasizing whole grains and veggies and avoiding dairy and simple carbs.

The freedom to sleep a little more.

A commitment to bite my tongue.

A husband who promises to never ask, "Is it that time of the month?"

These things and a well-marked calendar pretty much get me through PMS!

## Hormones!

Hopefully, you too have learned to identify the patterns of your emotional roller coaster and have found strategies to regulate them.

But did you have that maturity when you were blindsided by hormones at age 12? Do you remember the hopelessness that enveloped you when you woke up with your nose speckled with another outbreak of acne? Did you ever



just fling yourself on your bed and lie there for hours, wondering if the world would even notice if you were gone? Did you ever completely avoid looking in a mirror altogether because it made you feel so bad? How about the day your friends didn't include you...again? Or the way you had a nervous stomach on the first day of school every single year, wondering if you'd know anyone in your classes?

Oh, my sweet new friend, our dear daughters are about to enter into a season of emotion that's been unknown to them. Their little bodies will soon be barraged with once-foreign chemicals. Their minds will be gripped by thoughts they still can't imagine thinking. The long winter of emotion will seem to last forever. They will have days, weeks, or even months when they feel as if they've been called to climb Mount Everest in the midst of a blizzard with no sign of a warm fire or cozy tent. The time to arm them with truth to make it through that season is now!

Dennis and Barbara Rainey liken the many perils of the teen years to a field full of bear traps—traps with grim, gray, steel-toothed jaws. They say,

*Those traps, what about them? How much of a threat are they? We are convinced that far too many parents are lulled to sleep during the tranquil elementary years. Unaware of the approaching perils of adolescence and of how quickly they arrive.<sup>1</sup>*



Our girls are as naive as we once were. And sometimes as mothers we fail to recognize just how many more traps are out there now and how much more quickly our girls fall into them.

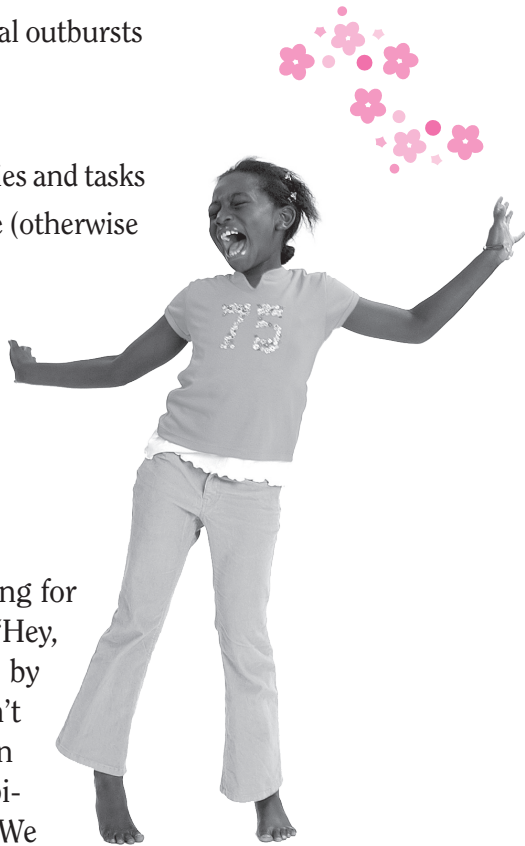
For starters, girls are beginning to menstruate earlier. Most girls begin between the ages of 10 and 13, but some begin as early as 9. Now, what fourth-grader do you think deserves the hassle of pads before recess? Along with the pads you might also see this lovely list of new traits in your daughter:

- unpredictable emotional outbursts
- a quarrelsome spirit
- lack of self-confidence
- loss of interest in hobbies and tasks
- inability to concentrate (otherwise known as mush brain!)
- sensitivity to noise
- irritability, nervousness
- food binges

## Body Image!

Of course, the food bingeing for you and me was kind of like, “Hey, pass the chocolate!” followed by giggles. Today, food binges aren’t to be taken lightly, as they can start a terribly disruptive spiral into bulimia or anorexia. We cannot be naive and think that our

daughters won’t fall prey. They are constantly being fed a lie of what a beautiful body looks like. The average model today weighs 23 percent less than the average woman today. When you and I were teens, the average model was only 8 percent thinner than the average woman.<sup>2</sup> A recent Harvard study showed that two-thirds of underweight 12-year-old girls thought they were fat.<sup>3</sup>



## Anorexia and Tweens

Bulimia—bingeing and purging—commonly starts during the high school or college years and affects about 4 percent of all young women. But especially watch out for anorexia—excessive dieting and denying the body of food. It often targets the brightest girls...the highest achievers...in their early adolescent years. It affects only about 1 percent of young women, but once it has made itself at home, it's among the most difficult emotional disorders to treat and has the highest fatality rate! See [anred.com](http://anred.com) for more information.

## Boy-Craziness!

Hormones and body-image lies aren't the only traps for our sweet girls. Boy-craziness hits during the pre-teen years, if not the early elementary years. It may not hit your daughter, but it's certain to hit her circle of friends. Some parents chuckle passively at this “cute” little trend. Let me let you in on a secret. Being in a dating relationship for six months or longer is a significant risk factor for teen sex. Since a girl's primary sexual organ is really her heart, the longer she stays in a relationship, the more she lets her guard down. Can you see how this “cute” little boy-craziness can be a set-up for serial dating, which places her heart and body at risk?

Many of these issues and other high-risk activities in tween and teen young women can be traced to a preoccupation with their body image and sense of beauty. A bad-hair day or a broken nail can become an obsession. Some girls will spend more time in front of the mirror than in their schoolbooks. Tiny flaws will begin to rule their mind. Women, we simply must rise up to speak truth to our daughters!

## Fashion!

And of course, we can't talk about the truth of their bodies without hitting the subject of fashion. Belly rings. Miniskirts. Bare midriffs. Tween girls are now wearing thongs! (And not the kind that go on your feet.) When I blogged about this at [secretkeepergirl.com](http://secretkeepergirl.com), I was disheartened to find some moms (though few) defending it. (This despite—besides the question of modesty—the concern from the medical field that thong underwear increases the risk of infection.)

I'm mad!



But I'm also hopeful.

Look at the fabulous women who made an impact on our world during their own tumultuous season of teen emotions.

Joan of Arc.

Anne Frank.

Rachel Scott.

Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And without a doubt each of these was climbing Mount Everest in a blizzard! I believe with all my heart that the primary reason Satan sets so many traps for our precious teens is that he knows how much power and potential for good they can unleash in our world.

We should not underestimate what our daughters can do. Instead, we should encourage them to be an example to believers in conduct, in faith, and in purity.

We can stay mad, or we can get smart.

Let's intelligently and lovingly arm our daughters with truth for the season ahead. *8 Great Dates for Moms and Daughters* focuses



on your daughter's image of her body and how she'll choose to present it in the years to come. It will not only help you teach your daughter the truth about her beauty and what God thinks about fashion, but it will also teach her the art of soothing her emotions with the refreshment of the Spirit of God.

And you'll both enjoy a strategically timed batch of fresh, hot brownies along the way!



*“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”*

*1 Timothy 4:12*



## How to Use “O Great Dates for Moms and Daughters”

When I wrote the first edition of this mother–daughter interaction guide in 2003, the word *tween* wasn’t very common yet. But I had one. She was ten years old, and her name was Lexi.

I knew when Lexi fell asleep at night. Her mouth finally stopped moving. She’d been like that since birth.

Sometimes out of sheer self-preservation, I would tune out. That little beauty was on to my game. Every now and then, just as I was about to immerse myself in an imaginary bath of Calgon, I’d hear her little voice bursting the bubble of my fantasy.

“Mom, what did I just say?” she’d challenge.

I know I’m not alone here. At some of my events I ask the teen girls what they most want to change about the way their moms communicate. Nearly every time a hand will raise and a freckle-faced, braces-laden beauty will say, “Like, she sometimes isn’t very focused when she talks to me. If she could, like, just not wash the dishes or totally stop taking out the trash when I’m talking and, like, well, really, totally look me in the eyes and, like, listen!”



Right about then I start feeling, like, really totally guilty!

### ***How to Be a "Connecting Mom"***

One of the greatest factors in reducing high-risk teen behaviors such as early sexual activity, violence, and substance abuse is parent-child connect- edness. (Translated: "like, well, really, totally looking our kids in the eyes and, like, listening!") I've written an entire book for you just about how to become a "connecting mom." It's called *Six Ways to Keep the "Little" in Your Girl: Guiding Your Daughter from Her Tweens to Her Teens*, and it'd be a great companion book as you do these 8 Great Dates together.

My dream for the original *Secret Keeper Girl: 8 Great Dates* was that it would be a tool to help moms spend focused time connecting to their little girls. It's become that, and so much more. Over 140,000 moms and daughters have done these 8 dates since the book came out in 2003. As a result, my team and I are poised on the front lines to protect the heart of tween girls as the culture insists they grow up...too fast!

And *Secret Keeper Girl* has taken on a life of its own, with our central focus being the *Secret Keeper Girl* Tour, a live event that provides the most fun a mother and daughter will ever have dig- ging in to God's Word. We've added fiction books, a Bible study, and another 8 Great Dates kit about true friendship. And we've initiated The Modesty Project, a collection of moms who want to be a positive voice for the retail and fashion industry, which some- times needs to be reminded that we want to buy modest and age- appropriate clothes for our little girls. (Check out the whole world of *Secret Keeper Girl* at [secretkeepergirl.com](http://secretkeepergirl.com).)

## What You'll Find in This Book

*8 Great Dates for Moms and Daughters* is fun-filled interactive “dates” for you and your daughter to explore God’s truth about true beauty and modesty. Each date is about one-and-a-half hours long (excluding your planning and travel time during the date). Be sure to take a camera along for at least some of the dates so you can have photos for the Secret Keeper Girl scrapbook you can create as an optional activity! (More on that later.) You can do these dates weekly or just spread them out and do them as you can schedule them into your life. Just don’t let them get too far apart. While each date will have a different topic and activities and even a slightly different order of events, they will all have the same features. Your date from start to finish will include the following:



### SKG Prep Talk

The Prep Talk gives you a little challenge of your own and an overview of the date. It’s best if you plan to read through this section a minimum of *several* days in advance. That way you have time to make appointments or reservations or schedule special guests into the date.

### SKG Radio: 7–10 Minutes

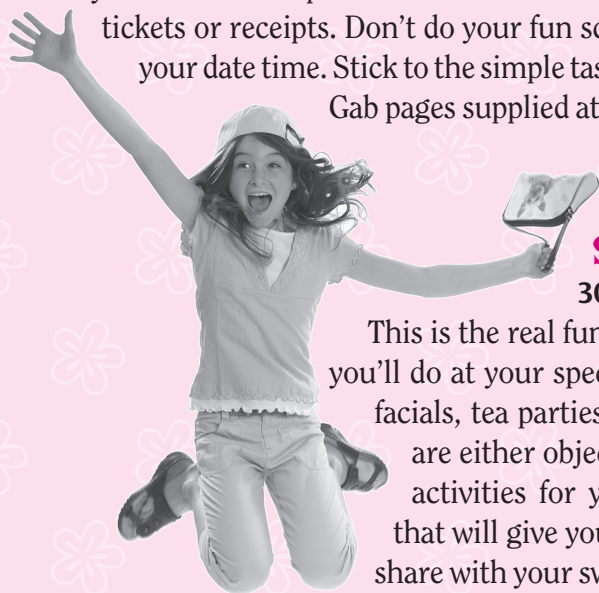
There’s one really cool aspect to these 8 Great Dates that requires a touch of technical skill. (You can recruit someone to help if you are technically challenged. You’ll only need help once.) Visit [secretkeepergirl.com](http://secretkeepergirl.com) and download the free audio MP3’s that accompany these dates. After you download them, you can either burn a CD for the CD player in your car, or just store them on your iPod or MP3 player so you can play them for your daughter on the way to and from the dates. These SKG radio moments really



support your dates. I'll be right there "with" you to share a story and get your hearts moving in the right direction for your upcoming activities. Can you get by without them? Probably, but they really do add a lot of depth to your experience. Go ahead. Tackle technology!

**SKG Girl Gab: 15–25 Minutes (with optional scrapbooking afterward)**

You'll need one fun and funky scrapbook for your daughter, if you want to do this in the ultimate way. A simple 99-cent spiral-bound book will work, or you can go all out and visit a place like Michaels for something with bells and whistles. (If you really dislike scrapbooking, you can skip that altogether. The important part is that you do the Girl Gab pullout pages.) The main purpose of the scrapbook will be to store your Girl Gab pullouts after you've filled in the blanks on your date. Later on, you can also add photos of the dates and other memorabilia like tickets or receipts. Don't do your fun scrapbooking as a part of your date time. Stick to the simple task of filling out your Girl Gab pages supplied at the back of this book.



**SKG Challenge:  
30–45 Minutes**

This is the real fun! The challenge is what you'll do at your special destination. (Think facials, tea parties, and shopping!) These are either object lessons or simply fun activities for you and your daughter that will give you great opportunities to share with your sweet girl!

Here's an overview of the fun  
in store for the two of you:

Date #1:

### **Your Beauty in God's Eyes**

*Challenge activity:* A tea party

*Key verse:* Isaiah 64:8

*Key thought:* A Secret Keeper Girl is God's masterpiece.

*Suggested challenge setting:* A tearoom

Date #2:

### **Real Physical Beauty**

*Challenge activity:* A facial or manicure

*Key verse:* Song of Songs 6:8-9

*Key thought:* Real physical beauty is the  
unique qualities that only I have.

*Suggested challenge setting:* A full-service  
spa or the home of a facial consultant

Date #3:

### **The Source of Beauty**

*Challenge activity:* A quiet encounter with God

*Key verse:* 1 Peter 3:3-4

*Key thought:* The source of my beauty  
is the presence of God.

*Suggested challenge setting:* Any place of solitude,  
such as a quiet mountain, a sunset beach, a  
cabin, or even a candlelit bubble bath

Date #4:

### **The Power of Beauty**

*Challenge activity:* A study of art

*Key verse:* Proverbs 5:18-19

*Key thought:* The intoxicating power of beauty is my responsibility.

*Suggested challenge setting:* An art gallery

Date #5:

### **Truth or Bare Fashion**

*Challenge activity:* Shopping with Mom in a vintage store

*Key verse:* Philippians 2:14-15

*Key thought:* I must express my beauty carefully.

*Suggested challenge setting:* A vintage clothing store

Date #6:

### **The Bod Squad**

*Challenge activity:* Shopping with friends

*Key verse:* Proverbs 13:20

*Key thought:* My expression of beauty is strongly influenced by friends.

*Suggested challenge setting:* A local mall or a favorite department store

*Special needs:* You'll need one to four of your daughter's friends and their moms for this one. Preferably they'll be also doing Secret Keeper Girl Dates or will at least hold to the same values that SKG teaches.

Date #7:

### **Internal Fashion**

*Challenge activity:* A new haircut or special updo

*Key verse:* 1 Corinthians 11:8-10

*Key thought:* My beauty is ultimately determined by what I wear on the inside.

*Suggested challenge setting:* Professional salon

Date #8:

### **Affirmation of Beauty**

*Challenge activity:* A dress-up date with Dad (and Mom!) to affirm your daughter's beauty

*Key verse:* Psalm 139:13-16

*Key thought:* God calls me a princess.

*Suggested challenge setting:* An upscale restaurant

*Special needs:* Dad (or a grandpa or big brother)





## Budget Crunchers

If money is a big concern, relax. In the few lessons that may be more expensive, I'll offer you tips on how to do it economically. Keep in mind that this option may require more time and planning.

## Small-Group Alternative

This needs to be fun, and in the area of modesty/fashion, it's really important to build a positive peer pressure among the girls in your church, school, or community. Date #6 requires you to have one to four of your daughter's friends and their mothers participate. It's far more effective if these girls and women have been learning the same things you've been studying during your dates. Therefore, you might encourage these mother-daughter pairs to do the 8 Great Dates along with you. You'll still "do" most of the book alone with your daughter, but you'll have two or three mothers taking their daughters through it at basically the same pace so you're all ready to do date #6 at the same time. (It might be fun for the moms to meet for lunch now and then to update and encourage one another. We moms need all the encouragement we can get!)

## SKG Radio: 3 Minutes

On your way home, just flip your CD or MP3 player back on for a special surprise. Former recording artist and bestselling author Rebecca St. James and others will share some of their own secret moments of struggling with beauty and fashion. To find out who you get to hear from, be sure to visit [secretkeepergirl.com](http://secretkeepergirl.com) as soon as you can!

## SKG Driveway Prayer: 3-5 Minutes

You'll wrap up each great beauty date with an intimate prayer in your driveway. Don't skip this vital time of growing closer through the power of God's presence. Your book will give you an idea of what you might pray, but feel free to go in whatever direction God leads you for this time.

Well, that's pretty much it.

Ready to start planning your first date?

