

A Dateable Retreat

based on

Dateable

Are You? Are They?

By Justin Lookadoo

and

Hayley DiMarco

Overview

5 Introduction

9 Day One / Evening (allow 2 hours)

Icebreaker: Dream Dates Activity 15–30 minutes

Large Group Session #1 1 hour

Small Group Session #1 30 minutes

13 Day Two / Morning (allow 2½ hours)

Reading Time 1 hour

Large Group Session #2 1 hour

Individual Time 30 minutes

16 Day Two / Afternoon (allow 1½ hours)

Free time and/or group activities

Small Group Session #2 30 minutes

Reading Time 1 hour

17 Day Two / Evening (allow 1½ hours)

Large Group Session #3 1 hour

Individual Time 30 minutes

Optional Late Night Session

21 Day Three / Morning (allow 2¾ hours)

Reading Time 1 hour

Large Group Session #4 1 hour

Final Challenge 30–45 minutes

25 Handouts

Introduction

How many teens in your church or small group are clueless about the opposite sex? Do they ever ask you questions you don't know how to answer? Do you ever wish you had more time to explore the topics of dating and relationships? Now you can.

The *Dateable* retreat is designed to help you lead a three-day retreat for the teens in your church or small group. Packed with tons of activities and discussion questions, this retreat guide gives you everything you need to help your students engage in their relationships with each other and participate in open, honest discussion of our book *Dateable*. Don't look now, but these conversations may just change the way your students approach dating and even look at the opposite sex.

In the coming pages you will find guidelines for large group sessions, small group sessions, and individual time, as well as time reserved for reading the book. These sessions were designed to help you and your students get the most out of the *Dateable* message. You'll also find activities, questions, and helpful sidebars that coordinate with specific chapters in the book and will help you personalize this retreat for you and your group. Please note that these questions and format are meant to be guidelines. Though the retreat schedule was written with a weekend format in mind, feel free to adapt the sessions and activities to your own timetable and location. You'll notice that the activities listed will not fill up every minute of the day, so you should have plenty of time to have some group fun or free time along the way. And when it comes to discussions, let the conversations flow normally. The questions provided will get you started, but your students may come with enough questions of their own to fuel an hour's worth of additional conversation. Or you may need to rely on the questions provided here to keep the discussion rolling. How you want to utilize these questions is up to you. Just remember: the goal is to generate a healthy discussion about dating—not to simply “get through” the list of questions provided.

It's almost time to get started. But first, here are some more helpful hints about planning your retreat and using this guide in a group setting.

Dateable Foundations

While this *Dateable* retreat is not intended to be an in-depth Bible study, the book has been built on biblical principles. One of these principles is the truth that each human is a valuable person created in God's image, deserving of love and respect

from others (Genesis 1:27). Another bedrock principle is the advice of Philippians 4:8, which encourages us to set our hearts on things that are true, noble, right, pure, and admirable. It's our hope that the *Dateable* retreat will help students think about dating in this light.

If you think your group already has a firm grasp of these principles, then you are ready to dive into this study! However, if some of your students are not familiar with these concepts, you may find it helpful to give a brief introduction to these ideas before you begin. You also might want to encourage your students to bring their Bibles with them on the retreat.

Before the Retreat

Hand out *Dateable* books to your students at least one week before the retreat. Tell them that you will be giving them some reading time during the retreat, but it might be helpful if they skimmed some of the ideas ahead of time. Also, ask them to have chapters 1–3 read entirely before you leave for the retreat.

Reading Times

Throughout the retreat there are several “Reading Times” designated for reading the rest of the book. Encourage students to be completely quiet for at least fifteen to twenty minutes, giving everyone a chance to concentrate on what they're reading. But as time goes on, be flexible with the noise level. Allow some spontaneous discussions to develop as they read.

Journals

You should provide a notebook and pen for each student to use throughout the retreat weekend. Encourage them to jot down notes and questions about what they read. You may want to begin each large group session by asking students to share their own questions first. Then use the additional questions in this retreat guide as time allows.

Take-Away

To help your students remember the *Dateable* concepts you study during this retreat, provide some sort of tangible item that they can take home with them. You could type out the brief definition of “Dateable” from chapter 17 on a card they can keep in their purse or wallet. Laminate the card and add a magnet on the back so students can also hang it in their locker if they prefer.

Follow-Up

If your group has a positive experience with the Dateable retreat, offer your students the opportunity to do a more in-depth study of these concepts with our book: *The Dateable Rules: A Guide to the Sexes*. This four-week study book is available wherever Christian books are sold (Note: many retailers offer discounts for multiple copy purchases). This and other youth resources are also available from Revell at www.revellbooks.com. And don't forget to check out our websites: www.hungryplanet.net and www.RUDateable.com.

Group Rules

Remind your students that this study group is a place where people are to be valued and respected. We suggest that you share these simple group rules with everyone before you start:

- » **Practice confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
- » **Respect other people's views,** even when they are different than your own.
- » **Listen. Listen. Listen.** Don't be the one who does all the talking, but let others have a chance to share their views as well.
- » **Don't interrupt.** Wait your turn to talk.

Tips for Leading a Discussion

Here's a few ideas to keep your discussions rolling in a meaningful way:

- » **Prepare.** Make sure you've read through the book chapters and the retreat outline for each session. As you prepare for the sessions, consider one or two personal anecdotes you may be able to share during the group's discussion.
- » **Be yourself.** Thank students for sharing their thoughts and opinions, but don't feel that you need to agree with every one. Be honest with your students about the lessons you've learned in your own experiences—even if they may not be what your students want to hear!
- » **Encourage students to go deeper.** When someone gives a simple response, ask them follow-up questions such as "Why do you feel that way?" "Explain what you mean by that." "Tell us more."
- » **Allow for silence.** Remember: Your students haven't read the questions ahead of time and they may need some time to process a response. Allow for about seven to ten seconds of silence before saying anything further, even when it makes you feel uncomfortable. If necessary, you can reword the question or move on to another topic.

Introduction

- » **Include everyone in the discussion.** If it seems like the same two or three students are responding to all your questions, look for ways to bring others into the conversation. Some students may need a little encouragement to share their thoughts and opinions. So invite them to talk by saying something like “Lisa, I’m curious what you think about this too” or “John, I’d love to hear what you have to say about that.” Be sensitive to their feelings, though: If the student has nothing to say or looks extremely uncomfortable, give them an “out” by moving on to someone else.
- » **Be a good listener.** The goal is to have a true discussion, not just a “talk” from the group leader. Avoid putting words in the students’ mouths or overreacting to comments that you may not agree with. Try asking “mirror” questions that challenge students to clarify or affirm what you’ve heard. For example, say “What I hear you saying is this. Is that what you mean?” or “So what you seem to be saying is this. Would you agree?”
- » **Bring God into it.** Pray for the students before and after each session. Ask God to direct your discussion and be open to the Spirit’s leading. It may be that He takes you in an unexpected direction, so don’t get too hung up on “the plan.” If students are genuinely interested and engaged in a healthy side topic, let the conversation go, saying a silent prayer for God to be working on their hearts as you go.

Day One / Evening

Icebreaker: Dream Dates Activity

Supplies needed: Paper and pen for each student

If your kids don't know each other very well (or even if they do!), try this activity to break the ice. Have each student write down their idea of an "ideal" date. Tell them money and location would be no concern. They can go anywhere in the world and do any activities they want. Once each student has written their idea down, have them fold their paper in half and place it in a container at the center of the room. After everyone's done, students will take turns grabbing a paper from the bowl, reading the date idea, and then guessing who they think might have written that response.

Large Group Session One

Opening Activity: "Magazine Mockups"

Supplies needed: Posterboard and markers

Divide students into teams of two to four. Tell the groups that they are editors of various best-selling magazines and their task is to create a special issue on dating. They should use their posterboard to draw a cover mock-up, including a picture and teaser statements such as "Best Cheap Dates" and "Take Our Quiz to See If Your Relationship Will Last." On the back of their posterboard, they should make a list of at least five articles/topics they will include in their special dating issue.

Once you are sure groups understand their assignment, tell them that there's one last detail they need to consider: The target audience of their magazine. Then assign each group one of the following magazine titles: Seventeen, Twenty-Seven, Forty-Seven, or Seventy.

For larger groups, you can add more titles, or assign the same title to more than one team.

Give teams about ten minutes to work on their magazine mock-ups and then have a spokesman from each team present their ideas to the large group.

Follow-Up Questions

- » Do you think that dating is different from one age group to the next? If so, how?
- » Should your approach to high school dating be different than the approach you take later in life? If so, why?

Student Feedback

Before moving into further discussion, ask students to share any questions or comments they had as they read chapters 1–3.

Discussion Questions for Chapters 1–3

1. Do you agree with the premise that “It Will Not Last?” Why or why not?
 - » Why do people date in high school? What are they hoping to get out of a dating relationship?
 - » Discuss this quote from the book: “So often we focus our energy and our desire on someone else. A person. A crush. We never get to explore that destiny we were designed for because we’re so busy trying to get someone to like us. We put our lives on hold because we think we will automatically accomplish all the great stuff when we get old. . . . Don’t let your plans get distracted by the search for love.” (page 9)
 - » If you started thinking of dating relationships as temporary, how would that change your approach to dating?
2. How do you think guys and girls approach dating relationships differently?
3. Do you agree with the authors’ concept that “How Much You Put In = How Much It Hurts When It Ends?” Why or why not?
 - » The authors suggest that you should guard how much you invest in a relationship physically, emotionally, and socially (page 33–40): How do you think a guy or girl can tell if they are investing too much in a relationship?
 - » What would be some smart dating guidelines to follow if you want to avoid having your life fall apart when a relationship ends?
4. On page 15, the authors say “Your dating experience will shape your married life.” In what ways do you think the typical high school dating scene is a good influence on future marriages? In what ways is it a bad influence?

5. Why do you think it might be better to let a relationship develop slowly, rather than jumping in fast and furiously?
 - » Consider this quote: “Don’t confuse the feelings with love. Love doesn’t feel all mushy. Love isn’t sweaty palms and sleepless nights. Love is a decision you make to care for someone no matter how you feel.” (page 23) Do you think most high school couples are truly in love? Why or why not?
 - » The authors list eight ideas to help you be remembered in a positive way after the relationship ends (pages 50–55). Can you think of additional ideas that will help you be remembered as “the one who got away”?
6. Did anything in these chapters change your views on high school dating?

Small Group Session One

Divide into mixed-gender groups for this session. Give each group a copy of the handout “**Dating 101**” and give them fifteen to twenty minutes for this small group session.



Day Two / Morning

Reading Time

After a good breakfast and a full night's sleep, your students will be ready to dig into more *Dateable* topics. Give them approximately one hour for personal reading time and ask them to look through chapters 4–6. Today's sessions will examine these chapters in more detail.

Large Group Session Two

Begin this session by asking the small groups from last night to share some of the rules they came up with during their “Dating 101” activity from yesterday. As you go, ask if they would add any additional rules based on what they just read in chapters 4–6. Use a white board or a piece of posterboard to create a master list of “Dating 101 Rules” based on the suggestions of your groups.

After each small group has shared, say that you'd like everyone to try a little activity before you move onto a more in-depth discussion of Chapters 4–6.

Opening Activity: “Fact or Fiction”

Supplies needed: Index cards and pens

Have students divide into pairs. Give each pair an index card and a pen and tell them to think up one interesting fact or statistic that they do not think the rest of the group will know. They should write their fact on the card. Then, they must make up two “fiction” facts about a similar topic. Each group should end up with one fact and two fictions.

Have each pair read their list and let the rest of the group guess which item is fact and which items are fiction.

If you want to make this a competition, give each pair a point when they guess the correct fact from another group. Give them two points

if no other group is able to correctly guess their own fact.

Follow-up Questions

- » How common is it for high school students to make up little fictions? Are there certain situations where lying seems more acceptable than other situations?
- » What types of situations tempt teens to lie the most?

Student Feedback

Before moving into further discussion, ask students to share any questions or comments they had as they read chapters 4–6.

Discussion Questions for Chapters 4-6

1. Do you think it always holds true that if someone will lie for you, then they will lie to you? Why or why not?
 - » How do a person's friends impact their character development? How can friends support each other in having good character instead of pulling each other down?
 - » What kind of dishonest behavior do you see in the dating relationships at your school?
2. Discuss this quote from chapter 5: "Don't forget, in the end, no matter how sweet he is, he is male first. And that means he has one goal, and that is the physical pay-off." (page 76).
 - » How do a guy's words and actions affect a girl's emotions when she's interested in him?
 - » Is a guy responsible for how his actions make a girl feel? Why or why not?
 - » How can a girl tell if a guy is being nice just to get a physical pay-off or if he's just a genuinely nice guy?
 - » Girls: Do you think girls often feel pressure for the physical pay-off? How common is that at your school? For teens in general?

Some questions are designated for "Guys" or "Girls." For these questions, we suggest asking for initial responses from the designated gender group. But as the discussion continues,

allow for additional response from the other gender group as well.

3. What kind of lies do you think girls tend to tell themselves about dating relationships?
 - » How true is it that girls tend to dream up a “perfect guy” that no guy can ever live up to?
 - » Should girls ask guys out on dates? Why or why not?
 - » Guys: Is it true that guys are more attracted to a girl “who’s smart, confident, and honest with herself?” as the book says on page 105? What are the biggest qualities that guys look for in a girl?
4. Would you agree with the idea that the basic thing teens are looking for in a relationship is acceptance? What lies do you see people believing to keep feeling accepted?

Individual Time

After you feel you have thoroughly discussed the topics from chapters 4–6, give students a copy of the “**Honest to Goodness**” handout and encourage them to spend the next few minutes being honest with themselves. You might suggest that they have their Bibles in hand during this time.



End this quiet time by talking to God about your friendships and dating relationships. Ask him to help you see things as they really are. Take a few minutes to simply sit in silence and give God the space to speak. What lies does he want you to uncover in your life today?

Day Two / Afternoon

Free Time and/or Group Activity

After your students finish the Honest to Goodness handout, we suggest giving them some free time to eat lunch, hang out, and get to know each other better. You may want to plan a group activity or service project. Challenge your students to a competitive board game. Go for a walk. Play a game of ultimate Frisbee. Whatever you choose to do, make this time fun and relaxing for your students.

Small Group Session Two

For this small group session, divide into same-sex groups. Give each group a copy of the “Strategy Session” handout.

Note that there are separate handouts for the guys and the girls.

Have them divide into separate rooms (or areas of a big room) and spend twenty to thirty minutes completing the handout together. After the handouts are completed, ask your students to keep their handouts and bring them to the large group session tonight.

Reading Time

Before tonight’s large group session, give your students one hour for personal reading time and ask them to look through chapters 7–10 and 16.



Day Two / Evening

Large Group Session Three

Before you start the opening activity of this session, ask the small groups to share their responses to the wrap-up questions that were asked on their “Strategy Session” handout. Ask if they would add anything to their strategies for sexual purity based on what they just read in chapters 7–10 and 16.

Opening Activity: Skin-Deep

Supplies needed: 10-15 pictures cut from magazine, paper, and pencils

To prepare for this activity, cut out magazine pictures depicting a variety of people (young, slobby, professional, soccer mom, grandmotherly, etc.). Be sure to include some photos of scantily-dressed sex symbol types. You should also include some photos of more “real-life” people—a mom with her kids, a person cooking a meal, or someone playing a sport, for example.

When the group is gathered together, hand each student a piece of paper. Then hold up one picture at a time and ask the group to write down two words that give their first impression of each person. Then go back over each picture and ask, “Assuming you were about the same age as this person, would you want to go on a date with them? Why or why not?”

Follow-Up Questions

- » When you’ve gone through all of the photographs, follow-up the activity with these questions:
- » Did you find yourself describing some people more like objects and others more as actual people with family, hobbies, careers? If so, what was the difference between the two groups?
- » Can you tell a lot about a person by their appearance? Can appearances ever be deceiving?

- » In general, do you think most high school relationships are more focused on the external (physical appearances, “making out,” sex, etc.) or on the internal (personality traits, hobbies, developing good communication, etc.)?

Student Feedback

Before moving into further discussion, ask students to share any questions or comments they had as they read chapters 7 through 10 and 16.

Discussion Questions for Chapters 7–10, 16

1. Do you generally agree with the statement that “people will treat you the way you are wrapped”? Think of some real-life examples to support your answer.
 - » Why do girls buy sexy and revealing clothes? Is it a good thing or a bad thing to want guys to notice your body?
 - » Do guys really have more respect for girls who dress modestly?
2. Do you think guys and girls generally come to relationships with similar sexual expectations or different sexual expectations? Why or why not?
3. Do you agree with this book’s premise that the guy should be the one to establish the physical boundaries in a relationship? Why or why not?
 - » Guys: Do you agree that girls have a subtle power in a relationship, if they’re willing to use it? In other words, if a guy is interested in a girl, can he be convinced to listen to her when she makes suggestions about her physical boundaries?
 - » Girls: Do you prefer for the guy to plan the date or for you to plan the date? How important is it to have someone plan the date, rather than just letting things unfold?
4. How far is too far? The authors suggest nothing beyond simple kissing. What do you think of these guidelines?

Yep, that means no making out. No “nap time.”
No “backrubs” or other assorted “feeling”
gestures.

- » What do you think of the boundary guidelines mentioned in the book (staying in public, not going to your houses when no one is there, etc.) What situations do you think it’s wise to avoid while you are dating?
- » Why is it important to set your own personal boundaries rather than waiting to see what your bf/gf thinks?

- » When should you and your bf/gf discuss the physical boundaries you set for a relationship?
 - » Should you continue dating a person if you haven't discussed your physical boundaries? What if you don't share the same feelings on how far you're willing to go?
5. Do you think the boundary rules should change depending on whether you're casually dating, seriously dating, or engaged? Why or why not?
 6. How does taking in pornography impact a person's ability to be in a healthy relationship?

Individual Time

For this individual time, the guys and girls will have separate handouts. Give the girls a copy of **"What's on the Menu?"** and the guys a copy of **"Get a Grip."** Encourage students to spread out and be quiet during this time for reflection and prayer.



Optional Late Night Session: Grill Time

During Grill Time, guys and girls will have the opportunity to grill each other with questions about the things they've always been curious about. Explain to the students at the beginning that this is intended to be a time where they can gain some understanding and appreciation for the differences between the sexes. This should not be a time for guy-bashing or girl-bashing.

To start the session, divide the guys and girls into separate groups and give them some space where they can sit together and discuss. For the first ten or fifteen minutes, let the groups write down questions for each other. Questions may be about issues that have come up in your Dateable discussion or about anything else they would like to hear from the opposite sex. If the groups need some help getting started, throw out a few sample questions, such as "Why do girls go to the bathroom in groups?" to "Why do guys act so macho when they're with each other?" Encourage the students to be respectful in the way they phrase their questions.

When each group has developed a list of questions, have them swap their question lists. Then give each group another 15-30 minutes to discuss the questions they've been asked by the opposite sex. As they develop answers for each question, have them appoint one person to answer each question in the larger group. Encourage as many people as possible to be involved with answering the questions.

Finally, bring the guys and girls back together for the "Grill Time" session. They should take turns asking their questions and then listening to the responses. Again, encourage the students to be respectful in the way they ask and respond to questions. Remind them that this is a time to understand and celebrate their differences.

Day Three / Morning

Reading Time

Begin the final day of the retreat with a quiet reading time. Ask your students to read chapters 11–15. The group sessions and final activities on today’s schedule will take a look at the topics discussed in those chapters.

Large Group Session Four

Opening Activity: Making Your Match

Supplies needed: Index cards and safety pins

To prepare for this activity, you will need to think of several pairs of opposites (or use some from the list below). Write one half of each pair on an index card, creating enough index cards for each person in your group.

For another fun option, use the names of famous couples in popular culture instead of the opposites. Be sure to use couples that teens will be familiar with.

Opposites:

- » Sweet and sour
- » Black and white
- » Sunshine and rain
- » Happy and sad
- » Soft and Hard
- » Loud and Quiet

When you are ready to begin the activity, use a safety pin to attach an index card to each student’s back. Tell them that their job during the next few minutes is to mingle

with the group and find their opposites. They may only ask yes/no questions of other people, and they may only respond to questions with a yes or no.

Follow-Up Questions

- » How did your search for your other half in this activity compare to the way teens look for a dating relationship?
- » How important is it to understand who you are yourself before you start dating another person?
- » In what ways do you think guys and girls are different from each other? Are they more alike or more different?

Student Feedback

Before moving into further discussion, ask students to share any questions or comments they had as they read chapters 11–15.

Discussion Questions for Chapters 11–15

1. Guys: Is there really such a thing as “guy mode?” How are you different when you’re with the guys vs. when you’re in mixed company?
 - » Consider this quote from page 161: “Guys, stop being jerks. Yeah, I just told the girls what guys are like, but I never said it was good. We guys are so afraid of things we don’t understand that we would rather be a butthead than appear soft.” Do you agree with the author’s suggestion that guys need to be more sensitive to girls? Why do guys have such a hard time doing this?
 - » Do you think it’s true that guys won’t be interested in a girl if she’s trying to act like one of the guys? Why or why not?
 - » Girls: The book mentions things guys should avoid doing in front of you (farting, telling dirty jokes). What other things do you think they should cut out when the girls are around?
2. Discuss this quote from page 167: “What [girls] want is adventure. Girls want excitement... She wants to be swept up in something bigger than she is. She wants a real man to take charge and give her the ride of her life.”
 - » What advice would you give a guy who wants to plan a great date?
 - » Girls: This book lists several traits that guys should strive for, including passion, confidence, strength, boldness, and adventure. Do you agree that these traits are attractive to girls? Are there any qualities you would add to the list?

- » How might different guys express these traits in different ways?
3. Do you think the book is accurate when it says guys like a challenge? Why or why not?
 - » Guys: Are you more likely to be interested in a girl if there's some mystery about her? Why or why not?
 - » What makes a girl "mysterious"? What sorts of things do girls say that ruin the mystery?
 - » Do you agree that guys should be the ones to ask a girl out and pay for the date? Why or why not? How does this tie into a guy's sense of challenge about a relationship?
 4. What does it take to be in a relationship? What should you be willing to put into a dating relationship to make sure it's a healthy and positive experience for both of you?

Final Challenge

Depending on your timeframe, you may want to weave this challenge into the end of Group Session #4, or you may give your students some free time/clean-up time before gathering back together for this final challenge.

Start this time by reading chapter 17 and the gray page that follows it.

Ask your students to refer back to the "Dating 101 Rules" you started compiling at yesterday's large group session (Session Two). Ask if there are any final rules they would add to the list based on the discussions you've had this weekend. Encourage further discussion if there are any rules that students disagree on. Your final list should only include the rules that everyone agrees on.

You may want to jot down a copy of your group's "Dating 101 Rules" to keep after the event. As a follow-up to the retreat, you can type them up and mail them to each of your students with a note of encouragement about their dateability.

When your list is complete, ask students to think about which rules they struggle with the most. Challenge them to choose one or two specific things they need to do in the coming weeks to make themselves more "dateable." Ask them to jot down their commitments in their journals so they can remember them when they get home.

Set up a bowl or basket in the center of the room and give each student a small slip of paper. Ask them to write down one of their commitments on the paper and then put it in the bowl. They do not need to put their name on this paper.

Dateable: A Dateable Retreat

End this time by praying for each other. Each student should take a turn grabbing a paper from the bowl and praying for the person who wrote it. Ask them to take turns saying their prayers out loud. Encourage leaders to jump in with prayers for the group as well.

If your students will not be comfortable with spoken prayers, you may want to simply play some quiet music and give them time to pray silently for each other.

Have students keep their papers so they can continue praying for each other when they get home.

If you've decided to provide a takeaway item for the students, hand it out at the end of this final challenge.

Handouts

Dating 101

Let's imagine that you meet a 16-year-old girl who managed to time travel from 1884 to today. Unfortunately, her time machine has broken and now she'll be forced to live the rest of her life in the contemporary world.

After learning the basics (like how to drive, what a computer is used for, and how to order a Whopper value meal), she's starting to settle into this new life. And now she wants a crash course in dating. What would you tell her are some of the basic differences between today's dating scene and the world she came from?

Based on the principles of *Dateable* chapters 1–3, and your discussion tonight in the large group, what “rules” would you give your new friend to help her have a good dating experience in today's world?

Honest to Goodness

Alright, it's time for some honesty. Here's a chance to forget everything else that's going on and spend some time thinking about your life. Start this quiet time by reading Psalm 139:23-24 as a prayer. Ask God to help be honest with yourself and with Him during this quiet time.

When do you find yourself lying? Is it to cover up mistakes? To impress friends? Something else? Take a minute to write about your "lying weaknesses" here.

Who are your friends? Do they share your values? Do they build you up or bring you down? Do they make you feel closer to God, or do they end up pulling you further away? Write down your feelings about your friends here.

When you look at what you just wrote, do you think you need to make any friendship changes? Are there any people you need to spend less time with? Any people you should spend more time with?

Do you ever lie to people to get what you want? If you're in a dating relationship (or pursuing one), have you ever lied to your love interest to try to get something out of them? Do you really care about this person as much as your words and actions are suggesting?

Have you been telling yourself any lies lately? Do you ever justify poor behavior by friends or a gf/bf? Do you find yourself ignoring the warnings of others when it comes to your relationships or love interests?

Strategy Session (Guys)

For this “Strategy Session,” your job is to help the following characters create an effective plan to get what they want. Read through the character descriptions and complete the assignments listed below each one.

Chris

Chris is a smooth operator. He has a way with the girls, and he usually gets what he wants from them. (And then tells all his buddies about it in the locker room afterwards.) Recently, he started dating Abby, a nice girl who’s very devoted to staying sexually pure. She hangs out in different circles and hasn’t heard about Chris’s previous conquests. Chris knows how Abby feels about sex—but he also thinks that she’s naïve in her views. He’s enjoying the challenge of trying to break down her defenses.

Your assignment: Come up with a list of different strategies that Chris might use to get Abby to have sex with him.

Parker

Parker makes good grades and has a reputation for being an all-around nice guy. He’s also a great football player and gets a lot of attention from the girls because he’s both athletic and smart. When it comes to sex, he really isn’t interested in starting a sexual relationship with anyone. He knows enough about teen pregnancy and STDs to decide that he just wants to steer clear of that whole mess right now. But sometimes it’s hard. When he’s out on dates or hanging out with friends, a lot of girls will throw themselves at him and flaunt every curve they’ve got.

Your assignment: Create a list of strategies Parker can use to keep his dating relationships sexually pure.

Wrap-Up

- » What was easier for your group, coming up with strategies to be sexually involved, or coming up with ideas to stay sexually pure? Why?
- » Do you think most guys tend to be more like Chris or like Parker? Why?

Remember to bring this handout with you to our large-group session tonight.

Strategy Session (Girls)

For this “Strategy Session,” your job is to help the following characters create an effective plan to get what they want. Read through the character descriptions and complete the assignments listed below each one.

Emily

Emily is a knockout. She’s tall and thin, and she’s got curves in all the right places. She knows she looks good when she wears tight, low-cut clothes and she likes it when she can turn a guy’s head. When it comes to dating relationships, she relies on her looks—and her willingness to be sexually active—to keep guys interested. She hasn’t dated anyone for several months now, but lately she’s been flirting a lot with Parker—one of the school’s best athletes. He’s a pretty straight-laced guy, but she thinks he might loosen up if he was dating her.

Your assignment: Create a list of strategies that Emily can use to lure Parker into a sexual relationship.

Abby

Abby is a good student who doesn’t get in much trouble at home or school. She’s committed to staying sexually pure until she gets married and she’s decided that she won’t go further than light kissing with any guy she dates. Recently, she started dating Chris. She knows he doesn’t have the best friends and he doesn’t share her values, but she thinks she can be a good influence on him and help him change. She just needs to be careful, because he has a way of making her forget all her purity commitments. . .

Your assignment: Come up with a list of different strategies Abby can use to keep her sexual boundaries in place.

Wrap-up

- » What was easier for your group, coming up with strategies to be sexually involved, or coming up with ideas to stay sexually pure? Why?
- » Do you think most girls tend to be more like Emily or more like Abby? Why?

Remember to bring this handout with you to our large-group session tonight.

What's On the Menu? (Girls)

In the last group session, we talked about what girls “put on the menu” when it comes to the way they dress and how far they’re willing to go physically in a relationship. Now’s the time to make it all personal.

Every girl wants to be admired and beautiful. But is beauty only skin deep? Sometimes we get so hung up on the way we look that we forget we have other qualities to offer.

Think for a minute about what you have to offer a guy besides your appearance. (You may want to include some of the qualities, hobbies, or talents that you’d like to develop in the future too.) Write down some of your thoughts here.

Take a look at the list you just made. Now ask yourself this: Does the way you dress encourage people to treat you like the person you just described above? Or does it leave them focused only on the physical?

What changes would you need to make to your wardrobe if you adopted the principle that “If It Ain’t on the Menu, Keep it Covered Up”?

When it comes to sexual boundaries, have you ever thought through where you would draw the line in a dating relationship? If so, have you stuck to that line?

For the rest of this quiet time, look at pages 122–129. Go through the steps to defining your boundaries and use the space below to write out your personal commitments:

- » Your “Won’t Do” List:
- » Your “Will Do” List:
- » What Will Be Your Symbol?
- » How Will You Encourage Your Guy to Lead?
- » Who Will Be Your “Backup”?

Get a Grip (Guys)

Ok, when girls wear skimpy clothes, they aren't doing us any favors in the battle to control our sexual desires. But there's never an excuse for looking at a woman as an object—or for taking her all the way sexually. When it comes to your sexual desires, it's time to get a grip.

When you think about women, or talk about them with other guys, how much of your time is focused on their appearance and/or what you'd like to do physically with them?

Is the way you think and talk about women the same way God thinks about them? If not, what's the difference?

What changes would you have to make in your life to keep your thoughts and actions more in line with the way God views women? What kinds of things could you do to show women—especially your gf, if you have one—that you respect them and see them as a whole person?

When it comes to dating relationships, have you been the leader in setting and respecting sexual boundaries? How could you do a better job of this in the future?

For the rest of this quiet time, look at pages 122–129. Go through the steps to defining your boundaries and use the space below to write out your personal commitments:

- » Your “Won't Do” List:
- » Your “Will Do” List:
- » What Will Be Your Symbol?
- » How Will You Encourage Your Girl to Participate?
- » Who Will Be Your “Backup”?

About the Authors of *Dateable*

Justin Lookadoo is a former juvenile probation officer turned author and speaker whose in-your-face message connects with teens. He is the best-selling coauthor of *Dateable*, *The Dateable Rules*, and *The Dirt on Breaking Up*, and also wrote *The Dirt on Sex* and *The Dirt on Drugs*. Find out more about Justin at www.lookadoo.com and www.rudateable.com. And for more information on booking Justin for relationship programs, parent conferences, or other *Dateable* speaking opportunities, please contact him at speakers@lookadoo.com or PO Box 3104, McKinney, TX 75070.

Hayley DiMarco writes cutting-edge and best-selling books for teens including *Mean Girls*, *Mean Girls Gone*, *Sexy Girls*, *Technical Virgin*, *Dateable*, *The Dateable Rules*, *The Dirt on Dating* and *The Dirt on Breaking Up*. Hayley also writes books for former teens including *Marriable* and *Mean Girls All Grown Up*. Her goal is to give practical answers for life's problems and encourage readers to form stronger spiritual lives. Hayley is Chief Creative Officer and founder of Hungry Planet, an independent publishing imprint and communications company that feeds the world's appetite for truth. Hungry Planet helps organizations understand and reach the multi-tasking mindset, while Hungry Planet books tackle life's everyday issues with a distinctly modern spiritual voice. For more information on Hungry Planet including leader resources and online communities that revolve around the books, visit www.hungryplanet.net.

