

God's Girlz dolls foster modesty, faith

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ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Turned off by the risqué clothing and sultry, "come hither" looks of other fashion dolls, designers at Kerusso decided to make their own. Modesty was high on the list of priorities for the Berryville-based company, but so was fashion appeal.

"We know what parents think of Barbies and how the clothes are too revealing and we didn't want to go there at all," said Lorri Carter, vice president of creative development.

Carter said the company recognized the huge popularity of the competition, but they also knew many parents were looking for a more wholesome alternative.

"[They] weren't happy with the look of Bratz or the innuendo, or with the figure of Barbie," Carter said.

Kerusso designers envisioned a more typically proportioned doll, yet one with chic clothing to appeal to young girls, and one with a price that could compete with other fashion dolls.

"We needed girls with a contemporary look, powerful content and under \$15," Carter said. "We wanted her to feel like a fashion doll."

That's how God's Girlz came

about. The 12-inch fashion dolls, introduced in 2008, have been a popular item for the Christian apparel company — so much so that Kerusso recently introduced a fourth doll. Imani, whose name means "faith," is the first black doll in the product line.

Carter said she looked at Kerusso's popular T-shirt designs for inspiration when developing the dolls.

The line includes Sarah, whose name means "princess." She was designed around the company's Princess T-shirt. Crowned with a tiara, the doll is dressed in a hot pink and purple tutu with a matching jacket. Her T-shirt proclaims "Yes, I am a Princess. My Father is the King of Kings!"

Other dolls include Hannah, whose name means "grace" and Abigail, the rock-and-roller who comes with her own tiny guitar. Imani is dressed in a denim skirt with a matching jacket. Her T-shirt proclaims "I am God's girl! I belong to Him."

The company also sells accessory kits for the dolls that include T-shirts, purses, toy cell phones, shoes and a pet dog. Girls can even buy youth-size T-shirts that match the ones worn by the dolls. Kerusso also offers girls' acces-

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sories including jewelry and hats.

Carter said the feedback from consumers has been very positive.

"Almost immediately we started getting e-mail from moms who were thankful we had something out there," she said. "They loved the content."

Vic Kennett, chief executive officer and president of the company, said all Kerusso products, including the dolls, are designed with God in mind.

"Everything we do, we

want it to point someone back to God and to His son, Jesus Christ," Kennett said.

The dolls' T-shirts, for example, each have a short biblical message to inspire the girls.

"It's a reminder to be thinking about God ... to keep God and their faith ever before their eyes," Kennett said.

Carter said each doll has her own personality and message. Abigail's is that she finds joy in playing her guitar as a way of telling God how much she loves him.

"When you buy a Barbie or a Bratz you don't really have a message, other than unrealistic body expectations, but our purpose is to encourage

a girl to growth in her faith," Carter said.

The dolls are sold online at kerusso.com and at Christian stores.

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